

ALBERTA WRITERS SPEAK



1880 90
SAVING THE HISTORIC SITES
. . . and Other Stories

ALBERTA WRITERS SPEAK — 1964



WORDS UNLIMITED WRITERS GROUP

FOREWORD

The articles, stories and poems in this book have been chosen from works of the The Words Unlimited Writers' Group. Some have been published previously and some have not. Each contributor assumes responsibility for his work, and reserves copyright.

What we believe to be the first writers' workshop group in Edmonton was started in 1947. Mr. J. Horan and the late Mrs. Eldon G. Hayward, gave their support, followed by help from Harold V. Weekes, B.A., Department of English, University of Alberta, Extension Department.

This Department established a scholarship for the Banff School of Fine Arts, under auspices of the Edmonton Branch, Canadian Authors Association. Mrs. Sophie McKenzie was awarded this in 1947-48, and the late Mrs. A. R. McEwan, the following year. Both of these writers became members of Words Unlimited which began in 1949.

The new group was invited to participate in a contest sponsored by the Alberta Department of Economic Affairs. Sophie McKenzie was awarded first prize for her essay on the future economic and industrial development of Alberta.

In 1957 Words Unlimited published and sold 1000 copies of a booklet, *ALBERTA SPEAKS*, made up of stories and articles contributed by its members.

This was followed by a second volume, *ALBERTA WRITERS SPEAK*, in 1960, which enjoyed an equal success. Copies were requested from most of the University libraries in Canada, including the Parliament Library, Ottawa.

We take pleasure in presenting this, our third collection of Canadiana under the continuous direction of,

BEATRICE (CLINK) TODD,
Editor.

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—by Goertz Studio

The restored John Walter house with the custodian, Roy Devore, Walterdale Historical Museum.



Cover: Barr Colonists loading freight and household goods for shipment to Lloydminster. Walter Mill and ferry in the background.

SAVING THE HISTORIC SITES

by Beatrice Todd

The author is a retired high school teacher who has, since her graduation from the University of Western Ontario, been interested in writing as a hobby. She has had short stories and articles published in a number of Canadian publications and was also a contributor to the Alberta Golden Jubilee Anthology.

In 1903 there were no bridges across the bustling Saskatchewan River at Edmonton, and the Walter ferry connecting the old town of Strathcona with the new capital, had to wend its way between the settlers' barges as they were loaded with lumber and supplies for the upstream settlements.

Rising on the hill above the old Hudson's Bay Fort were the new Legislative Buildings and across the river were the smokestacks and lumber piles of the busy Walter mill.

Now, half a century later, the scene is very different. The grounds of the Legislative buildings cover the spot where once the old Fort stood, and the mill was never rebuilt after the flood of 1915 destroyed it.

But recently the people of Edmonton have taken a great interest in their city's past, and plans were made to restore the John Walter house—the first building erected outside the Fort walls—as well as the Fort itself.

At one end of the Fifth Street Bridge stood the old log house which was the oldest inhabited dwelling in the city. Restored and repaired by the city's Archives and Landmarks Committee, it is now open for visitors each Sunday all the year round and on other days during the summer. The custodian, Roy Devore, an oldtimer in the Walterdale area and familiar with much of its history, enlivens the tour with a running commentary of first-hand anecdotes of the district and its early people.

The old house was built in 1874 by the pioneer Scottish boat builder, John Walter, once an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. He built the first Walterdale ferry and later helped to start one at Fort Saskatchewan. All the government ferries of the Northwest Territories were also made by him.

The house served as headquarters for the ferryman and as a rest house for travellers after Walter built himself a second and larger house nearby. Later he was to add the first sawmill in Edmonton to his long list of enterprises, and a coal mine at the foot of 108 street.

Through the trees in front of the house, an old road angles down the river where the Walter ferry, the *Belle of*

Edmonton, used to embark passengers for its crossing to Edmonton. The first cable ferry west of Winnipeg, it took over a year to build, and made its first run on April 22, 1882. It served cross-river traffic for more than twenty years.

A few rotting planks and the ruts of the old trail down to the river are all that is left today, but the Committee has fenced the grounds of the old house and marked the ferry dock with a cairn. An authentic model of a York boat sits on the river bank close to the spot, and a few picnic tables have been added for the use of visitors who wish to relax and enjoy the historic spot.

At the side of the historic building are now displayed the huge jawbones of an Arctic whale; an example of barrel transportation in the Klondike Gold Rush days; and a cairn and plaque supplied by the provincial government marking the area as a historic site.

Looking out from an upstairs window of the old house, we see across the river the benchland where Fort Edmonton once stood. One of the Committee's projects for the future is the building of an authentic reproduction of the old fort which was torn down after the Legislative Buildings were finished. There is strong support for the move to have the restored Fort located on the flats close to the old Walter house.

The second building added to the Walterdale Site was the old log house in which Edmonton's first newspaper, *The Bulletin*, was published in 1878. This was moved from its original spot on Jasper Avenue East and stands now with a monument to The Hon. Frank Oliver in front just east of the Walter house. Inside are pictures and relics of the pioneer publisher and his newspaper.

A replica of the old ferry is tied up at the foot of the path leading down to the river. Picnic tables are set under the shady trees on the river bank and many Edmonton families find this a good spot to sit on a summer evening and muse on the past.

Visions of a bygone generation seem borne on the evening breeze. Fur traders and Indians, voyagers loading York boats with cargoes of furs, black-robed priests and missionaries, and fearless settlers going upstream with their loaded scows pass in an endless procession. But all these are now part of the past. Only this memorial to their pioneering generations will remain.



The Bulletin Building on the Walterdale Museum Grounds. Monument of Honorable Frank Oliver in front of the building.

PIONEER OF PIONEERS — THE HONORABLE FRANK OLIVER

by Evelyn A. Willison

Evelyn A. Willison was born in Calgary when that city was actually a "cow town." Here she received most of her education, but graduated from the University of Alberta with Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education degrees. She taught for many years in town high schools, and for four years in the Alberta School for the Deaf, before retiring in 1960.

We paused before the bronze bust of Frank Oliver, at the Walterdale Museum. My sister and I were with our new friend, Mrs. Dora Anderson, a daughter of the pioneer honored by this statuary. That vivacious lady told us story after story about her father. He had probably been a "first" in more fields of enterprise than had any other early pioneer of the North-West. Mrs. Anderson told us that her father had started the first wild-life conservation measure by his timely purchase of a buffalo herd. She recollected how, during her childhood, he had in many ways fearlessly championed the cause of the West, taking a large part in making Alberta the great province in which we now live.

Born in Ontario in 1855, Frank Oliver had been trained as a printer in Toronto. But the lure of the West was strong, and soon led him to Winnipeg. Before long, though only twenty-three years old, he trekked by ox-cart to Edmonton. Here, after a few years as trader and store-keeper, the young

man became the owner and editor of the Edmonton Bulletin, the first newspaper in what is now Alberta. Through this lively little weekly, which began as one small sheet, five by seven inches, Frank Oliver began to gain power. He not only spread news of local and national events but constantly fought for justice and right as he saw it. With humor and sharp wit he "called a spade a spade" and "let the chips fall."

The alert young editor saw clearly many abuses in governing the North-West Territories through "remote control" from Ottawa, by men who knew little of the true situation. This "gadfly of the North-West" attacked humbug and corruption. It was said that readers of his fiery Bulletin could be classed either as those "who swore by it or swore at it." But Oliver always fought, whether for prohibition or politics, the right kind of schools or the right kind of settlers, without fear or favor.

He added to his strength by being elected to the North-West Council. The Saskatchewan Herald of June 23, 1883 has this to say: "The election for Edmonton resulted in the return of Mr. Frank Oliver by a majority of 60. In electing Mr. Oliver, Edmonton has secured a man well acquainted with the constituency he represents, and with sufficient courage to advocate what he believes to be right at all times and against any opposition."

As a member of the Council he framed the School Bill which pioneered the first public school system in the Territories. He was also a driving force in later obtaining from the Alberta Board of Education grants for high schools, teacher training schools, and a university.

Four years later this missionary of progress and justice was elected to the North-West Legislative Assembly which replaced the Council. Here he continued to strive for responsible government. But even before reaching this objective he was elected to the Federal House of Commons, the very first member of parliament from the North-West.

During Oliver's twenty-one years at Ottawa he continued to fight for his beliefs. His greatest achievement was, perhaps, the famous Immigration Act of 1906, while he served as Minister of the Interior. He was largely responsible for raising the quality of the immigrants into Canada. To secure the very best settlers possible the minister travelled much in the United States and abroad. His efforts paid good dividends, for during his six years as Minister of the Interior Canadian Immigration was at its peak.

Citizens of Edmonton have every reason to remember this versatile pioneer who did so much for the West. Memorials to him include photographs in the Parliament Buildings, original and microfilm copies of the Bulletin, the bronze bust, and not least the respect and gratitude of those who see his hand in the Edmonton of today. In his book "The Nor-West" J. W. Horan names five men who he considers contributed most to the history of Alberta. The Hon. Frank Oliver is one of these, chosen because of his statesmanship, and his contribution to education and settlement.

Recently the Oliver Building on 103rd Street was named in honor of this pioneer. Beneath a shining coat of arms of the Government of Canada is a bronze plaque bearing the following words:

THE HONOURABLE FRANK OLIVER

P.C., M.P.

PIONEER, JOURNALIST,
POLITICIAN

MINISTER OF INTERIOR

(1905 - 1911)

FOUNDER OF ALBERTA'S FIRST

NEWSPAPER,

THE BULLETIN, 1880

*"He is the pioneer of
pioneers, and of him . . .
it may be said that he
guided the constitutional
destinies of this part of
Canada."*

TWO-WAY STRETCH

by Effie Stewart-Richmond

Effie Richmond's writing first appeared in print in the Edmonton Bulletin when, as secretary to Mr. Campbell, she wrote book reviews and many poems. She studied Creative Writing in 1947 under Dr. Douglas Leachman at the High School of Commerce Evening Classes in Ottawa. While attending class she sold her first juvenile and since that time has published some 450 juveniles, 65 poems, and several articles in publications such as S. S. papers, Family Herald, Christian Parent, Aakland Tribune, Edmonton Journal, Calgary Herald, Jack and Jill and her own column "Granny Richmond tells a Story" for two and-a-half years in a weekly newspaper (Ferne Free Press).

Two-Way Stretch allows expansion, but maintains control! Everyone will notice the difference. Well, I mean, most everyone will. When you're living in the midst of the chang-

ing scene you don't particularly notice, but after you've been away for a number of years, then come back, you can scarcely believe what you see.

Nostalgic memories took me out to North Edmonton to look at my old home. I didn't have to walk from Swift's Packing Plant where the streetcars used to turn their backs on the distant Transit Hotel, then head back downtown. The hotel has a new face, but its feet are still firmly planted on the same corner.

I turned back to look for the huge sign board which indicated that, "The Fort Trail is the furthest concrete road north on the continent." There was no sign for of course many trails a great deal further north have been paved.

Between the buildings I caught a glimpse of the North Edmonton School. Strange how schools remain the same, year in and year out, except, perhaps, for a bit of the two way stretch. Somehow, the principals seem to stay the way we remember them too. I met Mr. Sinclair on the street one day and I casually reminded him of the numerous "two on one hand and two on the other" episodes. He smiled, "Certainly I remember you. You were the worst little mischief in the school." I looked at his askance, wondering if perhaps his memory was failing him.

I could see the firehall too. I once believed I had a personal interest in the first North Edmonton firehall. After all, my father worked as boss bricklayer on that job and that should give a girl some interest. I didn't bother to call in there because there would be no high-strung horses to feed. I used to race over to the firehall at noon and feed the horses, then one day I saw one of the stalls kicked to pieces. That frightened me considerably, and then too, the firemen told me the horse got mad because I was late with the feed. Sometimes I wonder about that.

Even though the pangs of hunger were gnawing at my stomach I didn't bother to call in at the corner grocery either. I was sure there wouldn't be any barrel of unshelled peanuts placed just inside the door, and I knew that bargains such as I used to get (all the peanuts I could hold in two hands for a penny) you just don't find any more. I don't suppose there are any free slices of bologna, or five or six penny candies for the children either.

But, I came to see my old home so I walked along the Fort Trail looking for a familiar landmark. I found one. It

was the huge frame house that used to be the parsonage for the Methodist Church. Where the church used to be I saw rows of white chicken houses and clucking chickens by the hundreds.

I was curious about the old parsonage. I wondered if anyone I had known lived there now. Perhaps one of the boys who flung the molasses cry-baby cookies across the church hall like flying saucers. "I hated you," I said emphatically, looking up at the winking windows, "I hated you for throwing our cookies around like that. Everybody likes molasses cry-babies and they're for eating, not for tossing about."

I longed to cut across the field toward my old home. I remembered I wasn't always so anxious. I shuddered to think of the spring stampede of cattle in the field when my sister, Jean, and I yanked off our red beaver hats and flung them into the bush. We had always heard that bulls didn't like red and we certainly didn't want to take any chances. We raced for home, returning sheepishly moments later, slightly red on unmentionable spots, retrieved our hats and continued on to Sunday School, urged on by a not too gentle reminder from Papa.

I wandered around in the maze of streets for a while, trying to locate Ryder Street. There were so many houses. If I could just find the "castles"—that was it, I must find the "castles"—then it wouldn't take me long to find my old home. The two vacant houses in the midst of a dozen or so in a tiny ghost-town in the middle of a far field, intrigued us when we were small. Even though the turrets were merely rounded corner windows, they were castle towers to us and we imprisoned one another there in many a bloody foray. There were no "castles" on any of these populated streets, but that looked like—it was my old home. The front porch was gone and it was covered with grey stucco, but I knew it was the house Papa had built so many years before.

The house looked rather aloof and I wondered if it had forgotten all the intimate little things, like when every spring, my brother, Sam, my sister, Jean, and I had to bail gallons of water to keep its bottom dry. Two of us worked in the unfinished square hole of a cellar, one dipping water into pails, the other handing the pails out through the tiny window to whichever of the three worked outside. It was always a mystery to us how such a small hole could hold so much

water. Roberta my younger sister, sometimes watched, but she was only two or so and would have drowned for sure had she ventured off the top step.

It was a fascinating cellar, though, for those were the days when people planned ahead. Papa, being a bricklayer and building superintendent, was not always busy in the winter time. There were no such things as huge plastic sheets to protect workers from the weather. Being far-sighted, Mama and Papa bought about 16 boxes of apples, two very large boxes of bulk dates, quarters of meat, bags of beans, etc. to tide us over the frugal months. I well remember how joyfully we kids left for school every morning clutching a small sticky mass of dates. There were always candy coated almonds too. Papa always had a supply of them on hand and that was the only kind of candy we ever had unless someone brought us a treat. One would think a dislike would develop but I still prowled around the stores searching for candy coated almonds.

The only water works we had were also in the cellar. These consisted of four steel barrels. Once a week the jolly, ruddy-faced driver of the water wagon clumped down the stairs to find out how much water we could handle. Papa had invented a system whereby the water was poured into a galvanized box on the front lawn, and from there drained through pipes into the barrels in the cellar. That water was cooler and sweeter for drinking than any I have tasted since. Our water supply was supplemented by a little nearby creek in the summertime and by pails and pails of melted snow in the winter. The city was always going to take the water and sewage out to the city limits, but never did, although I know they have finally gotten around to it.

There was no fence around the lot, the back yard was all grass now—no garden, no wood shed, no “house of parliament,” no chicken coop, and not even a hot bed for starting garden plants.

I continued to stare at the house and I wondered how it was for heat now. Were the upstairs bedroom walls still thickly coated with frost on cold days? A kitchen stove and coal heater didn't provide much warmth for the upstairs. There was really a good excuse for not jumping out of bed immediately when we heard Mama call, “Time to get up!” It was almost a pleasure to put on our thick-soled, high-laced felt boots for they warmed the cold tootsies after jumping out on to the cold floor.

The sun was beginning to set and I thought it was about this time when we could see Papa coming across the field blocks away. Couldn't see anyone approaching now — too many houses. I remember one night when Papa didn't come. The man next door, looking out of a ghost-like face, announced in sombre tones, "Mr. Stewart won't be home. There's been a terrible accident on the job." After that he was speechless.

We thought something had happened to Papa and we couldn't run in to the house and turn on the radio or TV for news, nor did we have a telephone. We just had to wait until late that night when my father returned from jail to explain what had happened. A scaffold had collapsed at the parliament buildings job and six men were hurled to their death. A seventh fell into a tub of lime and lived to give the evidence that exonerated Papa. My father had inspected the scaffolding and found it safe, but some foolish workman, needing a two-by-four, replaced one in the scaffolding with a lath. This is the way I remember it. Perhaps the facts are distorted by time and memory but I don't care to try to disprove this dramatic incident of my girlhood.

I glanced toward the north skyline and discovered there was no ridge of trees there any more, only houses. Where would all the youngsters from all these homes go to pick saskatoons and raspberries? That used to be a real outing for us and we went with all the kids in the neighborhood—about ten of us in all. We ate more than we brought home and there was one time we didn't bring home any at all. It looked like a good idea to sit on that fallen log, but they (the wasps I mean) didn't think so. I hate wasps!

Nice house on that back lot, I thought. I wondered how long it had been there. Lucky people to have a fireplug right on the corner. There wasn't one there when the big house burned right down. My Papa was certainly surprised when we told him and the policeman about watching the man moving suitcases, boxes and even some chairs and other furniture into the garage the day before the fire. We wondered about the policeman being so friendly with the man and taking him off for a ride in one of the new police cars. That was an exciting evening. The water had to be pumped from nearby wells and the little creek, and there just wasn't enough to do much good. I wanted to go up on the roof with my Papa and help to put out the sparks that landed there. It looked exciting to see all the men and boys clambering on the roofs of the houses and sheds.

I decided I had daydreamed long enough and had better start back. I had a block or two to walk to the bus and remembered when I had to walk all the way to the Highlands School to take my Grade VIII, and to the Parkdale School for Domestic Science. Gosh those were long walks, especially on cold frosty days. There were no school buses then, but Isobel, my best friend, and I occasionally rode in what we considered great style. We were often lucky enough to be able to hook a ride on the back shelf that extended out on the coal sleighs. We could have walked faster than the horses but, at least, we were riding.

I don't remember too much about the Highlands School as I didn't finish a whole year there before we returned to Pittsburgh. I do remember that the school was not completely finished and only a few of the rooms were in use. My teacher sent me to the principal because I sat and stared through the window and daydreamed. None of my dreams included rude boys who shouted, "Bean Pole! Bean Pole!" as the real life ones did. All my dream boys were tall and mannerly, too perfect to ever materialize.

I think of some of the good things we made in Domestic Science class at Parkdale School. Most of the really delicious items were eaten at the school but we were given some miserable failures to take home with us. Isobel and I hid many a failure under the wooden sidewalk. (Mama if you should happen to read this, don't mind for I'm sure you wouldn't have wanted the gooey masses anyway).

Wooden sidewalks were much more interesting than the paved ones. In the spring it was fun to sit dangling your feet in the cold, cold water from the spring thaw. (Mama and Papa wondered about our frequent colds). On cold winter days the sound of footsteps could be heard for blocks, and did you ever watch the nails jump out of the wood on a particularly frosty morning? "Step on a Crack and you'll break your mother's back" created quite a challenge too.

North Edmonton has experienced the two-way stretch. It's a bustling place, but not because the men gather, as they used to do, at the Transit Hotel, the Post Office or the General Store of a Saturday afternoon to discuss and settle world affairs. Cracker-barrel politicians—who knew just what was wrong with the world and what to do about it.

I think of the way we left North Edmonton. We were driven to the train by the York family in their brand new

Ford. It was a beautiful machine, fully equipped with isinglass curtains to protect us from the bitter March wind. The York farm used to spread over a good deal of that section of North Edmonton. They still had a few cows when we lived out there, and it was the York bull that chased my sister and me down Ryder Street. I could always race ahead of Jean but that day she was leagues ahead of me and it looked as though the soles of her feet were fastened to the middle of her back she travelled so fast. I got safely inside the gate of the home next door, climbed the back fence and raced upstairs to my room where I flopped under the bed. The bull did not follow.

My bus rounded the corner so I stepped out of my day-dream into reality.

North Edmonton certainly has experienced the two-way stretch, north-south, east-west and everyone has noticed the change—that it most everyone has.

ROBERT RUNDLE

by Gladys A. Willison

Gladys Willison was born in Calgary. She has had several stories and poems published, as well as an article in the "Alberta Anthology." "Land of the Chinook," stories of early Alberta, was published in 1955. At present Miss Willison is teaching Grade Five in Edmonton.

Robert Rundle—the first missionary to set foot in what is now Alberta, came from England in 1840. He was a small man, frail and slight, certainly not one to impress the Indians, who admired strength and physical prowess. Yet as Rundle travelled the length and breadth of Alberta the Red Man welcomed him. Cold or heat, flood or famine, could not deter him. And the Indians responded. The hearts of hundreds were moved to worship the God he revealed to them.

Wherein lay his power? Perhaps in his qualities of heart. He cared for all God's creatures, human or animal. When the sled dogs were beaten, or were cold and hungry, Rundle suffered. And how he loved the black-eyed Indian children. One item in his evangelist's diary records: "Heard today of the death of my little favorite, Nancy, an Indian girl. How sorry I felt! I nearly wept. Indeed I did so."

There was no pretense in the missionary. He faced life honestly and courageously. On his first visit to Rocky Mountain House he was uneasily watching for the warlike Blackfoot Indians of whom he had been warned. When word came that a party of them actually was near, his knees shook. But this man of God turned to his source of power and was encouraged by the thought, "Fear not, for I am with thee."

As Rundle and his party approached the fort they were greeted by a group of Indians. Their friendly manner led the missionary to assume that they must be Crees. Later he wrote: "But who in reality were they who welcomed us so warmly and cordially? Who but the terrible Blackfeet about whom I had felt such a shuddering only a few minutes before!"

After a church service Rundle might find himself shaking hands with a hundred Indians. In his journal we see this entry: "I felt the insignificance of my stature in comparison with these tall sons of the plains." Perhaps it was this very humility that won the love and respect of his Indian friends—humility and honesty, coupled with a keen sense of humor and a zest for living.

At last the time came when the rigors of the West broke down Rundle's body. His stomach could not stand the kind of food available on the trail. And as long as he was in the West Rundle travelled from place to place, sharing with his red brothers the love of God. Then the missionary fell from his horse and broke his arm. It was badly set and continued to trouble him. Finally came the realization that he must leave his beloved work. Only eight years after his arrival in "the wilds of Canada," Rundle had to return to England.

But his work lived on. Seven years later the Rev. Henry Steinhaur, who followed Rundle as a missionary visited an outpost group of Indians. As Steinhaur approached the camp he heard the singing of a hymn. Then the Indians prayed. This was part of their prayer: "O Lord, send us another missionary like Rundle."



Colonel James Walker

CALGARY'S GRAND OLD MAN

by Beatrice Todd

"Go West, young man! Go West!" was a favorite slogan among the people of Eastern Canada one hundred years ago. Perhaps this was why Lieut. James Walker enlisted with the original contingent of Royal Northwest Mounted Police raised in the Toronto area.

Coming to Alberta with the first group of Mounted Police in 1874, he spent the greater part of his life in the city situated at the junction of the Bow and Elbow rivers.

"We have one of the finest climates and the greatest strategic position for opening up this new West," he told the early settlers of the district.

Firm in this belief, he homesteaded and built his log cabin on the banks of the Bow within the limits of the present city of Calgary. Later, seeing the need for lumber, he started up the first sawmill in the little settlement. Most of the early buildings in Calgary were built with lumber from Walker's mill.

"I must have an orchard," he declared a few years later to his astonished neighbours. "I am going to send to Ontario for some young apple trees."

"Apple trees!" jeered his critics. "They'll never live in this climate. That's one thing that you can't beat."

But they did live! Planted by a loving hand on what had been nothing but open prairie and surrounded by a board fence for a windbreak, they grew and flourished, the wonder of the countryside. His original log cabin was soon replaced by a large frame house surrounded by his beloved apple trees.

In 1848 he was born in Carluke, Ontario, the son of Scottish parents. After public school he took a thorough business college course. Upon finishing this, he remained on the farm with his father for over ten years. During that time, however, he was studying gunnery and general military courses which were to guide his footsteps into his later career with the Mounted Police.

As a tribute to his military prowess he was appointed Lieutenant in the local militia. He also received a medal and script entitling him to one hundred and sixty acres of land in Ontario for his services during the Fenian Raids.

The turning point in his career came in 1874 when he acted as assistant to Colonel French in outfitting and raising men for the Royal Northwest Mounted Police in the Toronto area. Later in company with the force he proceeded by train from Toronto to St. Paul, Minn. the end of steel. Here large stores of provisions, feed for their horses, and farm machinery were purchased to be distributed at Fort Dufferin, Manitoba, and other posts throughout the North West Territories.

On their long and lonely march from St. Paul to Fort Dufferin many exciting incidents and adventures befell them. They narrowly missed encountering the bloodthirsty Sioux Indians, who raided and massacred the villagers of St. Jo, a boundary settlement. The worst of their troubles was the stampede and loss in a storm of most of their horses.

They took along eighty-six wagons and three hundred and fifty horses on the journey. It was their custom at night to draw up their wagons in the form of a square one side of which was the officers' tents. This left a large open area in the enclosure where the horses were all safely tied, blanketed, and fed.

One night while in camp near Fort Dufferin, a severe electrical storm arose. The wind which blew with terrific force wrenched the canvas off one of the prairie schooners.

It sailed over the camp amid the peals of thunder and flashes of lightning, frightening the horses. Frantic with fear, they burst their tethers and stampeded out and over the officers' tents, trampling the sleeping men. A few of the terrified animals were caught and Major Walker, mounted on one of these, started in quick pursuit of the runaways.

For sixty miles through the darkness of the night, in a blinding storm, he chased the fleeing horses. In thirty hours from the time he started, with the help of some of the troopers who had followed him, he had all the animals safely rounded up and in camp again. During that time he had ridden five different horses and covered a distance of one hundred and twenty miles.

Too much cannot be said of the pluck, perseverance, and endurance of the officers and men during the march westward. Their destination was the Cypress Hills and Fort Whoop-Up in Southern Alberta. Through trackless uninhabited country they marched along a line forty miles north of the boundary so as not to get into any mix-up with the American Indians who were then on the warpath.

After leaving Col. Macleod and a part of the force to establish posts at Ft. Macleod and other western posts, Col. Walker and his troop returned with Col. French and the rest of the staff to Fort Dufferin for the winter.

He had nothing but high praise for his men on this terrible march saying on one occasion: "I had a cheerful, faithful lot of men and often after some of our most discouraging days and perhaps a scanty supper from a fireless tent, some of them would start an old song such as, 'Tenting Tonight.' Everyone would join in with gusto. Or it might be a genial Irish sergeant I had would start, 'Killarney,' and they would keep on with old favorites like these well into the night."

Adventure called again a few years later. Col. Walker was sent with his troop to establish a post in Battleford. In addition to his police duties he was appointed acting Indian agent for that district. On more than one occasion his knowledge of the Indian character and his ability to cope with them in fearless yet friendly terms prevented what might have been the beginning of an uprising.

During the terrible winter of 1876 the buffalo were becoming scarce. This caused great hardship among the Indians who depended on these animals for their food. A large

number of starving Indians gathered about the post. After consulting with Gov. Laird, Col. Walker decided to have the Indians build a much-needed stockade about the police barracks in return for their rations supplied by the government. When he reported this to Ottawa, they sent word not to incur any expense for this work. He decided to disregard this order and keep on until the stockade was finished.

When talking of these days Colonel Walker at a later date said,

"One action of mine which I shall always look back to with a great deal of satisfaction was when I disobeyed orders from Ottawa and built a stockade around the Battleford Barracks."

The truth of his wisdom was soon proved. In the Rebellion of 1885 Chief Poundmaker and his Indians raided the settlement, burning the Indian Agency and other government buildings. Four hundred women and children in danger of massacre found refuge inside this stockade.

Later the lure of the West and the new era of ranching which was being established around Calgary called him to that adventure. After six strenuous but happy years with the Police, Colonel Walker resigned to take the management of the Cochrane Ranch. During the next two years he made many trips to the Western States, buying cattle and horses for the ranch.

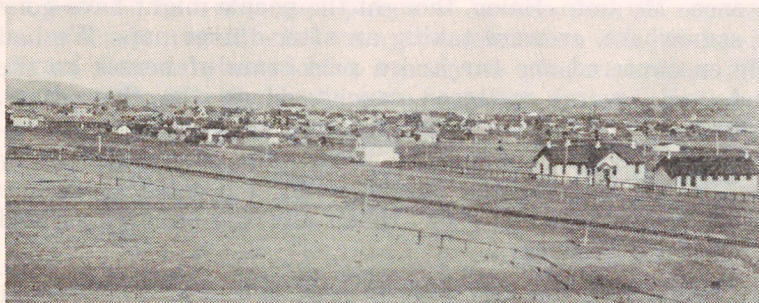
While still manager of the Cochrane ranch he set up the first sawmill in the small but growing settlement of Calgary. When he resigned as manager of the ranch late in the summer of 1882, he took the sawmill and timber limits in lieu of several thousands of dollars that he had invested in the ranch. The arrival of the railroad a few years later created a boom for the little town. Buildings sprang up on Main Street almost overnight and his mill was kept very busy trying to supply the demand for lumber.

When the citizens of Calgary decided that some systematic form of government should be formed, they appointed Colonel Walker as chairman of the committee to set it up. That same year he called a meeting to organize a public school. For sixteen years he served on the Calgary School Board and was chairman of the board for four of them. In his honor the public school in his district was called the Colonel Walker School.

The years passed quickly and his business interests kept pace with the growing city. He made many prospecting trips throughout Alberta and British Columbia. He became an authority on the mineral resources in that area. He organized a large anthracite coal mine in the Red Deer River in the mountains, and later a lignite coal mine east of Calgary. He never lost interest in ranching, however. He owned until his death a large ranch near Calgary, handling a large number of cattle, horses, and sheep.

In 1876 he was married to Miss Euphemia Quarrie, daughter of the postmaster at Galt, Ontario. They had one son, Captain W. J. S. Walker of the Calgary Light Horse. He was associated with his father in the real estate business in Calgary.

After being engaged in civic affairs for a number of decades, he retired, but still remained active in business, walking daily to his real estate office. His tall military figure and friendly smile were a familiar sight on Calgary's streets for half a century. Even when he was eighty years old, he insisted on riding in the pioneer section of the parade at the Calgary Stampede. Active and interested in civic affairs to the last, he died March 31, 1936, at the age of 88 years, the last surviving member of the original band of the North West Mounted Police.



Calgary from the east, 1893.

SHANGRI-LA ON THE PEACE

by Archie Hollingshead

The author worked on a cattle ranch in his youth and later became an employee of the Alberta Government Telephones. He took up writing as a hobby and has had stories, poems and articles published in a number of magazines. A resident of Edmonton, he now spends his leisure time at his favorite interest, writing.

In the summer of 1951, I proposed to my family that we take a motor trip to the Peace River Country. I wanted to fulfill a long-held dream of visiting Hudson Hope.

Scattered thunder clouds were pillared in the blue sky, the Sunday forenoon we reached the intersection where we turned off the Alaska Highway. With great trepidation we left the Big Road to pilot our '47 Ford over the narrower dirt grade the seventy miles to Hudson Hope.

For some distance the track skirted the Peace River Valley, dropping down and rising out of it several times. It was more precipitous and spectacular than any mountain road we had ever been on. With rain holding off, we kept rolling eventually reaching our destination early in the afternoon.

In a small clearing there was a new modest-sized H.B. Co. store, and a log-built tavern-style hotel, with some aging log buildings of the old post nearby. In the trees at one side was a small log Anglican Mission Church.

The residents of the hamlet were conspicuous by their absence. My wife, Helen, thought the people might have gone off somewhere, or were taking an after-dinner nap. We had only encountered one car and a pack-train of horses on the road, and several scattered ranches along the river flats. Feeling a bit let down, I started looking around for something of interest. I noticed a worn path descending a dry wash to the boat landing on the river. I decided to explore it despite the weather risk. Helen and the children elected to remain at the car.

Descending the path several rods, it turned to the right at the intersection of another small gully entering from the east. Advancing a few yards I heard the sound of water splashing. Continuing down the deepening gulch, I came to another turn, this time in the direction of the river. There on my right to the west was a small valley enclosed on three sides by the steep wooded walls of the gulch. From the rock strata of the north bank a spring gushed out with the force of a fire hydrant.

The hollow was treed with larch and had a neat pole fence flanking the path down. Pausing for a few moments, I perceived an odd stone-built tower with a timbered trestle trackway leading to it from the west wall. The spring fell several feet into a walled pool out of which a brook drained. The sides of the brook were lined with broken stone all along its winding course to the river. The ground beneath the trees was clear of underbrush and like a park.

Curiously approaching the tower, I saw that it was a lime-burning kiln with the trestle trackway leading from a quarry on the hill. From here I could see a neat log cabin further along through the trees. The little brook angled over and seemed to disappear underneath it. I paused at the gate to admire the profusion of flowers blooming in the yard.

"Archie! Archie!" called Helen at that moment. I turned to see her coming down the path with the children to hurry me back to the car.

"My, what a pretty place!" she exclaimed as she reached me, forgetting about the scolding she had intended to give me for loitering too long.

A small but spry old man came out of the cabin drawn by her voice. He graciously invited us to come in and look around his place. Following him along the delphinium-bordered path, he stopped at the front of the cabin to show us a round sunken depression, the footing of his first lime kiln. In here he had arranged pieces of broken rock to represent a mountain region. Between the miniature ranges he had dwarf flowers planted of a variety to give a verdure effect in the valleys with shadings to look like water courses.

The old man's preference for blue was evident in the cobalt trim of his cabin and the several garden seats set about. His flower beds were bordered too with blue iris and delphinium.

Partially tame squirrels and magpies scampered and flitted about the secluded valley. A rustic table with crumbs and scraps accounted for the friendliness of the furred and feathered denizens of the woods nearby.

Inviting us to come in and sit down in his neat and cosy cabin, the old man said his name was Pollon. He was a widower with a grown family. He had been brought to Fort Garry by his parents as a child one year old. At seventeen he had journeyed with an ox-cart to Fort Edmonton. After

a time of knocking around at odd jobs, he had proved up on a homestead. Being restless after a few years he had sold it for several hundred dollars and gone to the coast. In 1919 after returning from the war, he had married and started a store north of Peace River Town. He had later gone broke during the Depression from giving out too much credit to homesteaders. When his wife died, he loaded his children and the remnant of his grocery stock in his wagon and pulled out for new horizons. After weeks of wending their way through the bush, up and down hills, and crossing many creeks and rivers, they found themselves at Hudson Hope.

"If it hadn't been coming on winter, an' we was low on grub I'da gone clear on to the coast," explained the old man. "The Hudson Bay man offered us an old cabin to live in, an' I done a bit o' freightin' through the winter.

"Looking around when spring came, I found there was limestone here, an' I said I knew how to burn lime. It was my old pappy's trade. The Company staked me tools an' powder an' grub an' I burned quite a bit of it for them. I paid off the debt with the help of my two sons. I liked this patch of ground and bought it off the Company. My children grew up and went off for themselves. I stayed on an' since I've been getting the pension, I just putter around."

"It looks like you've done a lot more than puttering around here," I put in, smiling to show my admiration.

"You should ha' seen this place when I first come," the old man replied. "It was jest a trashy bog. It's took me years to clean it up."

"How did you ever get up and down those awful hills to reach here?" questioned Helen. "I could hardly walk down."

"There wasn't a road like there is now," he chuckled. "Not more'n a pack-horse trail. Gettin' down was the wust. I had to rough-lock all four wheels an' then the collars wuz nigh pushed over the hosses' haid's."

We were anxious to get back to the security of gravelled roads and on our rising to leave, the old man said he had something to show us.

Opening a trap door in the floor, he said, "This is my icebox."

Looking in the opening, we saw an oblong metal box bedded in the little stream. Here he kept his perishable items of food.

"I kin keep stuff fresh for two weeks down there," he informed us proudly.

"Does the brook flow in the winter?" I asked.

"Oh yes, but I dam-off this diversion in winter. It makes the house too damp when it's cold."

"I suppose it can get pretty cold up here," I questioned.

"I've seen it seventy below," he smiled. He had a ready and most engaging smile. "Snow kin get deep, too, but a Chinook will bare the ground overnight. It's down below zero one day and chinooking the next." After a pause he went on, "The creek is good drinking water, but it's a mite hard fer washin'."

After goodbyes were said, Helen and the childrent started up the steep path to the car, but I lingered at the gate mentally photographing this Shangri-La the old man had made. It was enchanting and the very air held a spell of friendliness and tranquility. I was glad I had come. I found this secluded haven intensely satisfying. I hated to leave it.

Hurried by a hail from my family, I put an arm across the bowed shoulder of the old man saying, "You are one of God's architects, pointing the way to make over the world. Goodbye, Mr. Pollon. We'll meet again. If not in this world, we will in the next."

A dozen years have gone by since 1951 and I have never been back. With the building of the Upper Peace Hydro Dam, great changes will take place at Hudson Hope. It is too much to expect that Mr. Pollon's Shangri-La will escape the bulldozers. The picture however will always remain in my mind as an embodiment of Beauty and Peace.



A LITTLE CHURCH WITH A BIG FUTURE

by M. M. Duncan

Mercedes M. Duncan began writing in 1956, after attending Creative Writing Classes at Victoria Composite, and since then has sold fiction to various publications, including the *Edmonton Journal*, *Family Herald*, *Western Producer*, and the *Canadian Messenger*. She is a graduate member of the Christian Authors Guild of Philadelphia, and also contributes regularly to several Sunday School papers in the U.S.

In the midst of southern Alberta's desolate badlands stands a tiny wayside chapel, known as "The World's Largest Little Church." It is a church without a preacher, without a choir, and with a seating capacity of only six persons, yet its attendance record has already passed the 50,000 mark since its erection in 1958.

Its congregation is not comprised only of local parishioners, for people from every continent have passed through its welcoming door; a door without a lock, open day and night during every season of the year.

The vast panorama of weirdly-formed terrain known as the Badlands of the Drumheller Valley slashes its way without warning across the patchwork of field and fallow that makes up the landscape of southern Alberta. Here, untold centuries ago, the mighty dinosaur roamed, and today the region is world famous as a graveyard rich in petrified remains.

The first time that Rev. E. C. O'Brien travelled the 30-mile loop called the Dinosaur Trail, the young minister of the Drumheller Pentecostal Tabernacle felt that this graphic reminder of the vastness of time and creation only served to bring him closer to his Maker. As he stood listening to the sigh of the wind amid the eroded escarpments of rock and sand, the thought came to him that here would be a suitable place for travellers to pause and humble themselves. In this age-old valley where the statistics of evolution sometimes tend to confuse the story of the creation, the Creator himself might be brought home more fully if there were some place available to pause for a moment's meditation or prayer.

Thus was born the idea of "Your Little Church in the Badlands," and it was not long before it became a reality. The business men of Drumheller backed the idea with enthusiasm and with practical assistance. The cost of building the tiny shrine was met by donations of labor and materials. A local contractor, Tyg Seland, erected the structure without charge for his time. The eight picture windows, each depicting a familiar Biblical scene, were hand-painted by a local artist Roger Gibson.

Inside the church stands a specially operated jukebox, donated by a Drumheller cafe. It is a jukebox with a difference, however, for no coin is needed for its operation. A touch of a button brings the chosen hymn and devotional message.

The remainder of the 11 by 7 foot structure contains six miniature pews and a stand at the front which contains a guest book, full of signatures and comments of visitors from all over the world.

From the outside, the little church looks like a picture on a Christmas card. Built in traditional style, it is painted white with deep pink trim. The 12-foot steeple over the vestibule holds a bell taken from a retired railway locomotive, which visitors take a special delight in tolling.

"I did not intend the little church to be just a tourist attraction," says Rev. O'Brien. "I wanted to set aside a place where people could get a little closer to God; and the Dinosaur Trail seemed to be the logical place to locate it."

It is evident that the success of his venture has surpassed his fondest hopes. A sign which reads: "Seats 10,000 . . . Six at a Time" was soon obsolete, for over five times that number have passed across the chapel's threshold. While

the main influx of visitors occurs during the summer months, there is hardly a day, even in the worst winter weather, that someone has not paused for a moment of quiet prayer. There have even been several weddings in the unique little building, although only the main principals could gather inside.

Is there a better place to be found than this little way-side church in the wasteland in which to reflect on the Biblical text: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . .?"

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ESTABLISHED IN EDMONTON

by Effie Stewart-Richmond

"Winter is the best time for church work here. In summer a good many are absent freighting, etc., while in winter nearly everyone is at home and has more time to spare."

This information was contained in a letter to the Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg when a request was made that a Mission be established in Edmonton.

The matter of financing such a project was also of interest to the Mission Board, and the further statement in the letter that, "Many of the older settlers were brought up in the Free Church of Scotland, so they won't have to be taught to give," was as good as any written guarantee of payment, should a missionary be sent.

Andrew Browning Baird, studying at the University of Leipzig in Germany, heard the "call of the wild." He penned a letter to the Home Mission Board in Canada offering his service in the Mission Field. His offer was accepted. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Stratford on the 16th day of August, 1881 in his boyhood church at Motherwell in Western Ontario. Immediately afterward he set out for Winnipeg, for this young man, with a background of three years of Theological training in Knox College, a degree of Bachelor of Divinity from the University of Edinburgh, and recent studies in Germany, had been appointed missionary to Edmonton.

The "jumping off" point for Andrew Baird was Winnipeg. He had learned that the best means of travel to Edmonton was by river steamer, and he looked forward with pleas-

ure to such a journey. However, he found that he had arrived too late in the season to take advantage of travel by river steamer. He was advised to try to find a freighter heading west, but all of these had also already left.

What to do? In spite of being accustomed to the culture of the Old World, and the rather luxurious living of Ontario, he was anxious to get on with his ambition to establish a Presbyterian Mission in Edmonton. The problem was solved by the purchase of a horse and a buckboard, and thus equipped, Andrew Baird started out alone on the long journey.

Camping out under the stars, lulled to sleep by coyotes' mournful howls, or wakeful because of burnt fingers obtained in the unaccustomed task of cooking over an open fire, he would search the broad expanse of prairie sky for inspiration. "Hitch your wagon to a star," might have been his motto for nothing less than the greatest accomplishments would satisfy the ambitions of this young pioneering minister. In fact, his dream of a large church with a hard working congregation, was far beyond what opportunity offered him at the end of his long journey.

It was noon on the 29th day of October, 1881 when a strange buckboard drawn by a weary horse and guided by a dusty stranger, appeared on the main street of Edmonton. Andrew Baird was the stranger, and he gazed intently at the few buildings, hoping to see a friendly face. He hardly expected to see a door open and hear a woman's voice say to her companion, "You must be the new minister."

As he met the prospective Presbyterian Congregation and looked about for a meeting place, did he envision the erection of the beautiful church building where the congregation of First Presbyterian Church worships today? Undoubtedly he did, for it was the farsighted vision of all of those first pioneers which laid the groundwork for the ever growing prosperous City of Edmonton.

The Methodist Congregation invited the Presbyterians to hold their first meeting in their log church. The invitation was graciously accepted. However, the further offer of the continued use of the Methodist church, while appreciated, was not accepted. This pioneer Presbyterian minister wasted no time in getting his small flock established in a meeting place they could think of as their own. This first hall was above the feed store, chosen after a congregational meeting attended by twenty-two people, and held in James McDonald's car-

penter shop. A Board of Managers was elected by ballot, a constitution was drawn up, and authorization was given to the newly appointed Board to select a site, preferably on the Hudson's Bay Reserve, for the erection of a church.

The "Big House," the official residence of the Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, became the first permanent western home for Andrew Baird. Here he felt comfortable and pampered like a favorite kitten. The room he occupied was spacious and graced by a large stone fireplace. Each morning a roaring fire was built on the hearth and the young minister arose in the warmth and comfort to which he had been accustomed. This might have lulled him into a sort of lethargy, but reality followed too closely on the heels of this pleasant interlude.

In 1882 a manse was completed on the bank overlooking the Saskatchewan River valley. The house ushered in a new era also, for it was the first one in Edmonton with lathed and plastered walls. There was no servant here to get up early in the morning and build a fire so that the young missionary might arise in comfort. He was now his own fireman, cook, launderer, tailor, etc. The rugged life had started and he enjoyed it.

The establishment of regular religious services in Edmonton brought a change in the week end activities. It had long been the custom on the part of the largely bachelor population of Edmonton and surrounding districts to congregate on Sunday for horse racing on the street in front of the Methodist Church, and for shopping for week's supplies. Now the horse racing ceased, and any Sunday shopping was done by pre-arranged signal, and business was conducted at the back door of the emporium.

In May of 1882 the first Communion Service was held by the Presbyterian congregation. Nine persons partook of the Holy Sacrament. The names of these nine people are commemorated on a marble slab in the vestibule of the present church where at present close to 700 people attend Communion Services.

The Hudson's Bay Company granted four lots for the erection of their church. The site was at the corner of what is now 104th Street and 97th Avenue.

New enthusiasm permeated the small congregation and Baird, too, approached the prospect of the new church build-

ing with a great deal of anticipation. He arranged, as his personal contribution, a specially built pulpit.

On November 5th, 1882 the congregation held their first service in the new edifice. It was not quite complete, due mostly to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient necessary hardware in the local stores. Then too, the pulpit was not yet finished, but these were minor details for the 200 enthusiastic worshippers who attended that first service in the new building.

A Sunday School was also started. Its membership was small. The majority of the population of Edmonton and district was comprised of newly married couples, young people and older bachelors. The years adjusted the balance—there were fewer bachelors and more married couples, so the numbers grew and the infant Sunday School began to outgrow the facilities of the small church.

Andrew Baird did not rest on his laurels. He was not satisfied that he had now established a growing congregation of Presbyterians. He wanted to expand the influence of the denomination. A congregation was begun in the Belmont School in December of 1881, even before the First Church in Edmonton had moved into its new building.

In January of 1882 Andrew Baird, with the consent and help of the Officer Commanding the Royal North West Mounted Police, started services in the Barracks at Fort Saskatchewan. Many services were also held in the homes of individual members of the Force.

Most communities preferred services on Sunday but at Sturgeon (now known as Namao) the Presbyterians were so anxious to get a church started that they willingly attended week night services under the direction of Rev. Baird.

In Clover Bar, the same year, services were started in private houses. The sturdy faith and religious background of Presbyterian families was in action. The Church was gaining ground. 1884 saw a student minister coming to assist Andrew Baird in his ever spreading work, and in 1885 a Mission School for Indians was established at Stony Plain.

The work that the young pioneer minister had started in 1881 passed into the hands of another great pioneer, the Rev. Doctor McQueen. Andrew Baird was summoned back to Winnipeg where he was given a professorship, and McQueen began his work amongst the western Presbyterians—a work which was to extend over a period of many years of progress, hard earned but gratifying.

THE MAGIC WORDS

by John Delaney

John Delaney is a native Albertan having been born and raised in the City of Edmonton. He is employed by the Dominion Government in the Department of National Revenue as Customs Officer. He has written articles, short stories and radio scripts. His hobby is amateur dramatics.

"Goodbye! I'll come to visit you soon. Merry Christmas!"

These parting words rang in the ears of Muddy-Bull as he turned his pony's head away from the stockade of Mowbray House, westward toward the camp of the Buffalo Skins, some ten miles away.

He drew his blanket closer about his body against the biting cold, and hunched his six foot frame forward, over the shoulders of the horse. Black, piercing eyes looked steadily into the storm.

"Merry Christmas!" Muddy Bull thought of the words of the God-man. "What does that mean? Must be very powerful words." He grunted and dug his heels into the sides of his pony, forcing the reluctant beast to head into the driving wind, with its blowing, drifting snow. A long uncomfortable ride like this was a good time for thinking, and he had much to think about.

For three days now he had been at the fort, in response to a summons from the factor, listening to the missionary. He had heard many wonderful things some of which, he dimly understood. This Jesus had been a good chief, and had died bravely. Somehow he and his father, the Big Chief, had acquired such strong medicine that they could grant the wishes of anyone who prayed to them. If this was so, it was a very good thing, and needed much talking-over. He hoped that the promised visit would be soon.

Then there was the matter of Yellow Bird, his wife. He shifted uncomfortably on the hard pad that served as a saddle. Yellow Bird was still slim and quick and pretty, though she had been in his tipi for three years now. She was childless. That was what was bothering him. Here he was, without children: a man who belonged to the three secret societies of the tribe. He had been appointed chief of the Buffalo hunt twice in succession and five times he had counted "coup" on his enemies. This hard-won reputation was being lost because he didn't have a son. The old men were beginning to wonder audibly, around the fire. It wasn't Yellow Bird's

fault though. She had done what she could. A visit had been paid to Shakes-the-Wind, the medicine man who had promised to work a mighty spell that would bring her a son. What an expense that had been: one pony and two buffalo robes, and all for nothing. Shakes-the-Wind had been very impressive. Two solid hours of shrieking, dancings and incantations in and out the Medicine tipi had frightened every woman and child in the place. The old women of the tribe had come secretly with their advice and remedies, but nothing had come of that, either.

Muddy Bull grunted again, as his eyes discerned through the swirling snow the thirty lodges of the Buffalo Skins, a Wood Cree tribe that numbered some one hundred persons. This winter camp was at the foot of the mighty Rockies, on open meadows at the edge of the spruce forests. The hunting and trapping was varied and good. He was home. He jumped off, staked out his pony, and ducked through the flap of the tipi.

Yellow Bird, kneeling over a task smiled up at him.

"I have been to the fort and talked with McDougall the trader," he told her. "I have powder and shot for the winter, a hatchet and some tobacco."

"That is good. I will get you food."

"I have something else—for you."

"What is it?"

"Here."

"Uh - uh - uh -" Yellow Bird crooned delightedly over three shiny needles stuck in a little piece of calico. "Now I will decorate your moccasins and leggings with the colored beads, so that everyone will envy you."

Muddy Bull ate the food that she brought him, and for many minutes sat in silence. "There is a God-man at the fort. I have listened to him for a long time. He wants us to pray to a great chief called Jesus, who can do many things for us."

"But we pray to the Manitou, the Great Spirit."

"I told him that. I don't think I want to become a . . . a . . . Christian."

"What is a Christian?"

"I don't know. I asked him, but I couldn't understand what he told me."

Another long silence, then Yellow Bird spoke again. "Shakes-the-Wind told his wife that you should have a son. He said that the old men have been talking."

"Let them talk."

"Runs-Swiftly told Spotted Deer that the tribe could surely find a Captain-of-the-hunt, that had a son."

"I don't want to hear any more women-talk."

For a long time there was an uneasy silence, broken only by the sound of the crackling of the wood on the small fire in the centre of the lodge. Muddy Bull drew a long reed and sandstone pipe from a parfleche case and put tobacco in the bowl. Yellow Bird handed him a coal from the fire and he smoked the pipe with quiet enjoyment. He was restoring the pipe to its case when Yellow Bird spoke "My husband . . ."

"Yes."

"There are many hides to be tanned, many robes to be made, and much wood to be carried."

"That is so."

"Why don't you get another woman in the tipi, to help with the work?"

Astonishment held him speechless for a moment. He looked at her, but her eyes were downcast, and she would not meet his glance. Then feeling its insistence, she raised her eyes to his with quiet dignity. Crossing her arms over her breast, finger tips touching her shoulders, she made an odd gesture of resignation.

"Do you want another woman in the tipi?"

"It would be company for me."

Muddy Bull had never felt so perturbed in his life. He knew what she was doing. Another wife in the lodge, one who probably would be able to give him a son, and Yellow Bird would be relegated to the inferior status of second wife. All the drudgery and the hard tasks would be hers. She would lose caste with the tribe.

The idea of another wife was certainly attractive in some ways. He knew of several maidens who would gladly fill the role. However another wife would be expensive. More ponies and buffalo robes would have to be paid. Then too, there was the problem of talk. One woman talked quite enough, but with two women talking and sometimes quarrel-

ling, life would be unbearable. He also knew that deep down inside him he did not want another woman. Yellow Bird was his wife and he realized with surprise that he loved her.

"Bring me my snowshoes, I am going out."

"I will get them. When will you be back?"

"I don't know."

Taking them from her he opened the entrance flap and stepped outside. He knelt in the snow and adjusted the snowshoes to his moccasins, then set off for the spruce forest that skirted the mountains.

The snow had stopped falling and the wind had dropped. Everywhere it was white and cold and very still. The pale moonshine reflected a thousand glittering points of light from the snow crystals. The only sound that could be heard was the "shush-shush-shush" of the snowshoes as he hurried over the meadows and entered the forest. He followed one or two game trails, branching off from one to another with no particular purpose but travelling hard and fast.

Once again his thoughts intruded on him, so that he was hardly conscious of where he was or what he was doing. Yellow Bird had looked so dignified, so submissive. He was an important man in the tribe, but without a son. Maybe because of this, he would never be elected chief. Someone else less worthy would be chosen. He didn't want another wife. He wanted Yellow Bird. He wanted a son.

He stopped dead in his tracks, his chest heaving with exertion, as he realized with a shock that he, one of the best "Snow-walkers" of the Buffalo Skins had been running for some considerable time, and was now close to exhaustion. The great idea had come to him suddenly!

The God-man had told him about prayer. He said if you believed, and if you prayed hard enough, your prayers would be answered. Well, he had tried praying to the Manitou—that hadn't worked. He had tried Shakes-the-Wind's medicine, and that hadn't worked, so why not try what the missionary had told him? Still, he felt self-conscious about this. Suppose the white man was fooling him; maybe he was a trickster like the Old man of the Crees, always playing pranks on people. What did he have to lose—nothing. Maybe—just maybe, he might be given a son. He took a deep breath, and raised his eyes to the star-filled sky.

"Ho Jesus! You are a very powerful God! Muddy Bull prays to you for a son. Want son very much. Manitou no answer my prayer, maybe you answer. Maybe you give me a son." Then feeling that something more was needed he repeated the magic words, "Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!"

As his voice died away the silence came surging in, and through the woods the stillness was overpowering, tense and expectant.

He turned in his tracks to go back, when he stopped and stiffened in a listening attitude. Nothing, his ears were playing tricks on him. No — there it was again, that strange noise.

From where he stood, there was a short distance away a cave in a sloping bank, almost completely hidden by a thick growth of spruce. The sound might have come from there. Hurrying over, his hand on the knife at his belt, he looked at the bank. There it was again, that sound that seemed so familiar.

Pushing his way through the spruce, Muddy Bull stopped in amazement. In front of him there was the torn, dead body of an Indian, the mangled body of his wife and the carcass of a huge bear, the knife still driven deep in its heart. But what was that? Just inside the cave, safe from harm, wrapped in the moss-filled carrying bag was a very young child, a boy.

Muddy Bull picked the child up out of the bag and held it against his body to warm it. Meanwhile his eyes read the scene like a page from a book. An Indian and his wife had been caught by the fierce storm while travelling, and knowing about the cave, had taken shelter there. Unfortunately the cave had an occupant already in it; one not yet quite asleep for the winter. Because of the weather they had entered without taking their usual wary precautions. The disturbed monster had attacked them. The mother had managed to free herself of the baby before being struck down. The father had been able to kill the beast before he himself succumbed. The squaw had recovered enough to drag the baby into the cave and shelter it with her body before dying. This had accounted for the strangely muffled cries of the baby in the cave.

Muddy Bull felt the little body stir against his, as the infant sought to get more comfortable against his chest. A strange, warm, comfortable feeling spread all over his body. It felt peculiar, but very very good. He had never felt like this in all his life; it was wonderful. After dragging both bodies inside the cave, he gave a glance at the sleeping infant riding comfortably against his chest and set off for home.

This time, he did not go so fast, but the way seemed shorter and his thoughts were pleasant. In fact he was happy, and felt a little guilty that this was so.

As the tall tipis of the Buffalo Robes came in sight, he gave a great cry that caused the people to come crowding about him.

"Ho, Buffalo Robes! Ho there! Come out and see what Muddy Bull has brought home. Look! Look!"

Among the many faces, he saw that of Yellow Bird, by her own lodge. Walking over to her, he held out his arms with their bundle.

"Here woman, here is our son! I'll have no other woman in my tipi."

"Yes, husband!"

"I've prayed to the White Man's Jesus to give me a son. He did."

"I am so glad!"

"So now I will pray again. Ho Jesus! You gave me a son. I thank you many times. I pray to you all the time now. When God-man comes to visit, I become a Christian."

He finished his prayer, and looking at the staring eyes and expectant faces, added the final, powerful words, "Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!"



Steam-operated harvesting equipment with crew. They serviced the pioneers' crops in the Wetaskiwin area in the early 1900's. Edwin Stroschein, father second from right; Henry, son third from right; Paul, son fourth from right; Herman, son fifth from right; Fred, son sixth from right. Edward, son fourth from left; Albert, son (M.L.A.) second from left.

THE STROHSCHIEIN SAGA

by Sophie Anne McKenzie

Mrs. Sophie McKenzie is a housewife who loves to write. Her work which has appeared in numerous Canadian publications is done in between caring for her husband and their five children. She was awarded the first writer's scholarship, granted by the University of Alberta Extension Department to the Edmonton Writers' Workshop tenable at Banff.

The Alberta Government's prize for the best essay on the "Economical and Industrial Development and Future of Alberta" was captured by her "Potential Land of Croesus," which appeared in "Stet" magazine.

Behind a house, preserved by an additional covering, the Strohschein sons have kept intact their first log home, hand-hewn and lovingly-fitted by their father, Erdman and those who helped him in the fall of 1893.

Standing in the one large room you sense the drama as you feel the axe marks along the skinned logs.

Later, we returned to the modern Wetaskiwin bungalow, where Herman began the story. His eyes took on a far-away look.

"At that time when we got the letter, we were living in Poland. There was our father, Erdman; my mother Elizabeth and us four children.

"My sister, Augusta was twelve, I was seven, Gustave five and Baby Henry just three months.

"The letter was one of many. My father kept getting them from his brother in the new land. He had gone there to make his fortune and had settled in the United States. He always wrote about the freedom and adventure to be found there and that last letter of his was so colorful, it decided my parents and they made the move.

"In Iceland we joined with 500 immigrant families." Herman chuckled. "There were even two sheep and a pony aboard that vessel, which took us to Quebec. . . . From there, we travelled west by train.

"There was a stop at Winnipeg. The Icelanders along with most of the others got off. Now, at this point my father should have gone south to the United States to join his brother. But there was a thing in my father which fired his imagination after he listened to those few enthusiastic pioneers who were eager for the newly-opened Canadian West. Of course, we children were excited by the idea, but I think if my parents had known then what it was to be like . . . I think they would have gone south.

"Those endless plains without house or trees to be seen for mile upon mile made us so tired. It was a week before the prairie was behind us and we saw mountains. That was a good sight, believe me. There's something different about the sky in Alberta than anywhere else. It seemed to us then to be so much clearer."

Herman's gaze moved from floor to ceiling as he said: "We just couldn't get over the piles of buffalo bones near the town of Calgary . . . as high as haystacks. Some people thought they were to go to the new sugar industry south of Calgary. There the bones would be burned. One thing we did learn about these bones was they were left after the wasteful buffalo hunts put on two years before we came through. That must have been in 1891 when the white men allowed parties of thrill seekers to slaughter the beasts by the thousands."

"In Calgary or Cowtown, as it was called, dozens of Blackfoot Indians dressed in buckskin, scented the coaches with the smell of campfire smoke, their black braids sometimes touching the palefaces they examined, as they moved silently on their moccasined feet.

Herman said: "My mother was terribly frightened for us. She still pulled us close about her even though my father told us the Indians wouldn't harm us. Once the train started, she was all right again. This time we headed north," he said.

They followed a ribbon of steel just two years old. It brought them to their destination of Wetaskiwin, on August 16, 1893.

"Here, we Strohscheins found that there were no roads, bridges, money and many, many more things we were used to. You can imagine my father's disappointment when he found out that land speculators had moved in ahead of us settlers and now owned the choicest property.

"Some of the settlers turned back . . . others went north and east," said Herman. "But my father met with the heads of twelve other families and they decided that; since the shrewd operators left them without choice; they would open up virgin territory next to Indian country. This land was in an area six miles west of the settlement. Father bought 160 acres from the C.P.R. at three dollars an acre."

He fingered his moustache. "Let me see now . . . besides this land my father also acquired a homestead a half-a-mile further west.

"Now, each settler soon found out that in order to survive he absolutely must have a cow. Not only were cows necessary for the milk, butter and cream, but the butter and cream were needed to barter for groceries. And since we needed groceries, my father and another settler, Adam Brickman decided to walk to Strathcona to buy some cows.

"They travelled the same trail made by the Blackfoot Nation which is still called the Calgary-Edmonton trail. From early dawn until late at night they followed this trail and finally came out at Strathcona.

"The next day my father bought six cows; Adam got two, and they started for home. But this was not so easy as coming up. For one thing the animals needed constant watching. They would try to graze and stopped at any excuse. It took the men two days before they were able to see the settlement. They had taken turns sleeping and watching on the trail, but just the same, one of Adam's cows lost its calf.

"Now, sometimes when a cow loses its calf it refuses to let down its milk. This is what Adam's cow did. In the end they had to skin the calf, stuff and place it in front of the cow before she would allow herself to be milked."

"That fall, the homesteaders lived off the land on rabbits, prairie chicken, wild ducks, pike from the "crik," blueberries and cranberries. They helped each other with the clearing and received in exchange weaner pigs, or whatever the other had which the other needed. In this way we readied the soil.

"At first we all milked every cow, to get as much cream and butter as we could, to get groceries. Of course this kind of barter became a nuisance all round. Quite often the settlers were given credit slips for the extra milk and cream and they were always losing them. Record-keeping was haphazard and so the settlement came up with its own idea of money. This money in the form of aluminum tokens circulated until 1900, when the real money came in."

Herman began to chuckle. "I can see those tokens yet. Each store had its own kind. Most were round, but one place, the Star had a sexagon. We used to laugh about how a pioneer could save enough of these tokens to buy a horse, yet in the whole settlement of Wetaskiwin he wouldn't be able to buy a postage stamp for real cash. I remember the men saying that they would have hired out at fifty-cents a day to get their hands on some real money, but since all the settlers around were without money, workers could only be hired on a barter basis."

The Stroscheins made every available use of the unusually mild winter. Besides the outdoor work, crude furniture had to be made out of native woods, usually poplar.

"Those who were lucky enough to have brought boards with them had them for the bottoms of their beds . . . but most of us had to be content with split willows. Another thing we had was straw ticks for mattresses," said Herman.

Fred, another Strohschein son spoke up: "My yes, and were we ever busy, especially Mother and my sister Augusta after four more of us arrived. You see, I was born in 1895, then came Paul in 1897, Ed in 1899, and Albert in 1905. To think we all survived is a bit of a miracle because there wasn't a doctor to be had in those days . . . only a midwife. To keep us warm, Mother used to spin the wool out of which she knit stockings, mitts, sweaters and scarves. The sheep also provided us with wool for quilts. That was work again . . . carding and layering the wool. It was a luxury to own a quilt with four layers of wool."

Tapping his forehead, Fred said: "Oh my, if you think that was work, Mother still had to figure out ways to make

the rest of our clothes, such as shirts out of flannelette, and flour sack dresses and so on. Then too, she had to worry about the food. Flour was important and with the mill at Fort Ethier having such a slow process, we could only take two sacks of grain there at a time and still had to wait two days for the flour. Then Mother had to make her own yeast and bake our bread after that."

While Fred talked, Herman looked thoughtful and then broke in with: "I think that of all the things my parents missed in those days, real coffee and good porridge were high on the list." He made a face. "We used to have a kind of porridge, like glue. It wasn't too tasty. Mother used to make a kind of coffee . . . out of ground chickory roots which she grew. It tasted very bitter. But you get used to anything," Herman chuckled. "All, but hanging!"

"Yes," reminisced Fred. "Remember, I told you how the first winters were mild and the summers dry when our parents came to this country. Well, the settlers thought the weather was always going to be like that. So they didn't make hay for feed; their cattle shelters weren't good and their homes were cold. When the severe weather came, we suffered great hardship."

"I think the worst time was in 1900," said Herman. "When all that snow melted in the spring it was so wet we had to swim creeks and ford rivers which hadn't been there before . . . even through the summer. Mosquitoes swarmed by the millions! Some nights when they came with the wind, they got in your hair and eyes, nose, and mouth so bad you had to stop and make smudges, or you couldn't get the cows and yourself home.

"I remember in the year 1899, my father had to smoke the horses each time he came around the four acres he was trying to clear. If he were using the wagon, the way we made those smudges was with green leaves thrown over burning sticks in a pail hung on the tongue of the wagon below the horses' heads. Children in those days often carried smudges in iron pots to school for protection.

"If you think that was bad, the no-seeum flies were worse, if possible. They got into the animals' eyes and noses so bad the tormented beasts just had to lie down and roll over and over."

"Speaking of insects," Fred said, "you should have seen our poor mother with those houseflies. There were no screens to be had, and at mealtimes in the months of August and

September the flies were so terrible we could hardly take our food."

The Strohscheins broke their first ten acres of home-
stead in the year 1894. On this land they seeded oats and
a soft wheat which couldn't stand the early frosts. Then
they tried Red Fife and later Marquis. This latter variety
yielded 300 bushels off the whole ten acres, which was then
considered to be a very heavy crop.

In speaking of how they farmed Herman said: "The
way we did it was this. We used oxen and a walking plough
to break the land. The grain was sown broadcast by hand,
harvested with scythe and cradle and threshed it with flails.
Before many years went by horse-power seeding and
threshing machines and later yet even steam-powered thresh-
ing machines moved from farm to farm. By the time my
father was ready to take our first grain to Strathcona he
had a team. To get it he had to sell a two-year-old steer
for \$20 and a cow for what would be equal to \$30."

Fred said: "Things were looking up by then. A system
of taxation started so that we could get roads. The first one
of such roads to be begun is now called No. 19, the Pigeon
Lake road."

"But what was good for my father," said Herman, "he
was given a chance to work off our taxes by working on this
new road." Herman clasped his hands together. "Now let
me see. Two days' work would pay off a quarter-section. In
a few years the taxes rose to two dollars cash and so much
labor. You know people wanted more by then. They had to
have scrapers and culverts. Gradually the tax went up until
in our time it is about \$250 for a quarter-section. Of course,
in those early days we didn't have the school system."

Herman remembered that the first school to be started
in the new community was held three miles from his home at
a neighbor's place. This man had taught school in the old
country. "At that, we could only go to school in winter. Even
then, some children got there for perhaps a week all told.
They lived so far and there were no roads . . . with the
weather too cold for such a long walk, they just couldn't
make it. By spring break-up, it was too wet . . . so wet you
would have to swim all the way. So we couldn't go then.
And in the late spring and summer, we children were needed
to help on the land, when the weather was good."

Pleasant Prairie School No. 401 was built in 1899, five miles west of Wetaskiwin. John McVicker, formerly of Ontario, was its first teacher.

At the mention of this man's name, Henry, the third eldest Stroschein brother began to laugh. "Do you remember," he chuckled, "his cart and pony? Our roads were so often bad that our teacher would have to climb out and lift the cart. Before he could get back in it, his pony would take off. We would see our teacher coming, fighting his way through the muck.

"Another time, the singletree broke and away went the pony. It looked so funny to see our teacher coming down the road to school, pulling his cart behind him."

Fred drew his chair closer: "Remember our first classroom? Those homemade desks . . . and no textbooks to put on them. Just imagine getting an education with a slate and a piece of chalk! But we did! The only subjects taught were reading, writing and arithmetic . . . nothing more."

"It didn't hurt us though," broke in Paul. "Herman here has been a councillor for 33 years and in fact was recognized by the Queen with a medal in 1958 for having been the longest continuous member in North America."

"Of course we all became farmers," reminded Herman. "Our family's holdings grew over the years to fifteen quarters or 2400 acres."

Fred said: "Of the original 160 acres, I would estimate there's about five to eight acres of brush left." He went on to explain how the Strohscheins came by all these acres, which they had acquired over the years.

"There was about seven years of the wettest weather not long after the settlers arrived. Because of the great hardship this caused, they grew discouraged. One by one they came to my father and begged him to buy them out so that they could move to another site."

Although the Strohscheins accepted those same hardships they were not left unaffected by them as Augusta, the only daughter confided before her death.

"We were just like prisoners. Everywhere you looked there was water and mud. With no roads, we were completely isolated. I longed for the companionship of other girls, but there were none. Besides this I was frightened of the Indians

who were west of us, but they proved friendly. Even so, I would get so disheartened I would run down to the "crik," fling myself down on a high piece of ground and sob my heart out. I guess it was the never-ending work and hopelessness of trying to keep clean in the eternal bogs of mud. Once the middle of August came we knew that from then on until late spring, it would take hours to get our washing dry. As you know, every stitch of clothing had to be hand made and was laundered by hand. Being the eldest, I was expected to do a good deal of this work. Added to this, the younger ones had to be cared for . . . there was the garden to tend, butter to churn, eggs to gather, and the never-ending knitting, darning and patching, wool carding and spinning to do."

Augusta overcame her tribulations and added much to Alberta's growth as a pioneer wife and mother in her own right. William Falkenberg, her husband was one of the noted Falkenbergs who pioneered in the Leduc area.

As they grew older the Strohschein sons gradually took over some of their father's acres, which he divided into farms.

Despite hardships and privations the family has always been God-fearing and faithful in offering its service to the church, which was first established July 12, 1896 at an open air meeting.

Erdman and Elizabeth were among the twenty-four members present who listened to their pastor the Rev. F. A. Mueller, outline plans for the building of their German Baptist church.

This little church seven miles west of Wetaskiwin, was replaced by a new structure built in 1911, five miles west of the settlement and again in 1942, where the present structure is familiar to lake-goers on the Wetaskiwin-Pigeon Lake highway, six miles west of Wetaskiwin.

Over the years, Erdman served as deacon in 1898, 1899, 1910-1931.

Fred followed in his father's footsteps. He became a deacon in 1939 and has served for many years since.

Nor were the other Strohscheins to be outdone in service. The church's records list the name over and over again. Albert headed the young people's group in 1926 and was a clerk in 1943. Herman, Fred and Paul have served as trustees. Henry has been a treasurer from 1917 - 1927; 1940 -. Wives and grandchildren, uncles and cousins carry on the tradition.

By 1908 progress saw the Strohschein family settled in

what was considered to be one of the most modern homes of the day. The seven-room, two-story frame dwelling is still in most livable condition, although the family no longer lives there.

Fred and Henry have retired from their farms and now make their homes in Wetaskiwin. They visit their farms from time to time and both marvel at Henry's trees. A tree-lover, Henry was given a handful of maple seeds by a teacher. That got him started on his hobby. In two years he planted 1,700 trees. Today these trees are a living memento of state-ly grace.

Paul and his wife are still active on their farm, but Ed has left the district and now farms with his family at Red Deer, Alberta.

Albert, the youngest son, was elected to the legislature, where he represents Wetaskiwin in the Provincial Social Credit government.

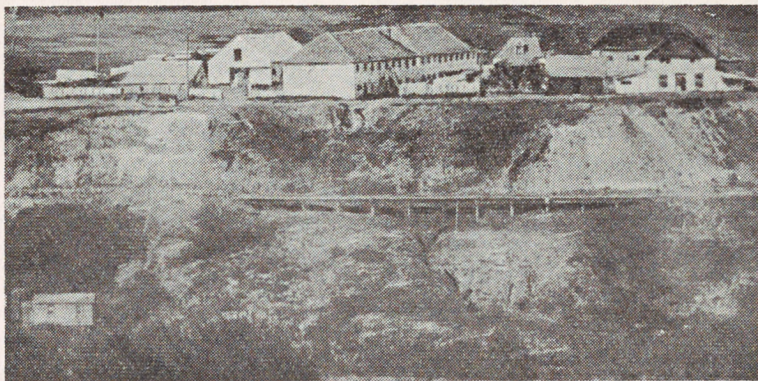
Little did the family dream, as we listened to his saga, that Herman would be called so soon by death. He joined Erdman, Elizabeth, Gustave and Augusta, August 25, 1963.

Though dead, their works and those of the other Wetas-kiwin pioneers, are very much alive in the branches of the family trees, of which they are the roots.



The Strohschein home, built in 1908 and still in fine condition.

For historical purposes it seems fitting to list the names of those twenty-four charter members of whom only one, Mrs. C. Scheler, lived to take part in the fiftieth anniversary. Besides Erdman and Elizabeth Strohschein, there were: Mr. and Mrs. Carl Bieber; Mr. and Mrs. A. Brieckman; Mr. and Mrs. Bucholz; Mr. and Mrs. Paul DicKau; Mr. and Mrs. Herman Heise; Mrs. Joseph Marquardt; Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Kost; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Mueller; Mr. and Mrs. John Panter; Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Scheler.



—Ernest Brown Collection

The Old Hudson Bay Fort in the grounds of the Legislative Buildings
before being torn down.

THE WAY THINGS HAPPEN

by Stella Johnston

Stella F. Johnston, Edmonton housewife, and a Grade III teacher for the Edmonton Public School Board, has written a number of articles, educational and local-interest type; also children's stories, which have appeared in Canadian publications. She also has an article in the Alberta Golden Jubilee Anthology.

"Come, lads. Drink this hot soup Mrs. MacInnis has made ready for you," the Factor said as he handed a steaming bowl to each of the two small boys huddled together in his biggest chair. "It'll soon warm you."

He poked vigorously at the tamarack log in the great stone fireplace and a shower of sparks swirled around the iron soup kettle which swung from a crane over the crackling flames. The firelight danced on the white, freckle-stained face of Robbie Hunter, and on the sad brown face of the Indian lad, Beaver Boy.

Beaver Boy watched Robbie drink the soup from his buffalo horn spoon. Then, timidly, he did likewise.

"Whatever were you doing out in a storm like that, Robbie?" asked the Factor. "When the sentry told me that you were at the gate with a strange Indian, both of ye half dead, I could scarce believe him. All the time I thought you were safe in the fort."

What a storm it had been! The worst in Fort Edmonton's history. The whole world had seemed filled with thunder that shook the earth, and lightning that split the clouds, and hailstones that stripped leaves and branches from trees, and then bounced along the ground like frosty marbles.

"Well?" said the Factor, frowning, and Robbie drew his Tartan blanket closer about him.

"Fishing," Robbie answered faintly.

"I might have guessed it," said the old Scot. He knew the boy's fondness for the sport.

"Fish bite best just before a storm," Rob added hurriedly, "and I had caught eight already. I thought I'd try for two more. Then I'd go."

"But the storm caught you instead," said the Factor.

Rob nodded. "It was awful. The way the thunder roared and the lightning flashed, I thought I'd be killed on the spot. Then it got so cold. And did you ever see such hailstones?"

Gently he fingered an egg-sized swelling on his head. The Indian boy nodded and tenderly rubbed a bruised cheek.

The Factor looked grim. "No, I never did," he said. "Broke over half the glass windows in the Big House. See that?" He pointed to a pile of shattered glass that the old Scotch woman, Mrs. McInnis, was gathering up. Rob saw a piece of buffalo hide had been fastened across the window frame. "Fort Edmonton had the only glass windows in the West, and now most of them are smashed," and the Factor sighed heavily. "But what of this boy?" he asked, nodding towards Beaver Boy.

The Indian lad huddled lower in the chair and pulled his Tartan blanket closer about him.

"Well," continued Robbie, "it got awful dark all of a sudden, and I kept tripping over broken branches and leaves, and then I tripped over him. He was flat on the gravel, face down, with his feet and legs still in the river—just like he was dead. I dragged him out, and thumped him on the back, and after awhile he got up, and we came home."

The Indian boy sat up straight. Gathering his few English words together, he said, "Rob, good boy. Save Beaver Boy's life. He carry me up hill to Fort. Rob, my brother. I all alone."

"What's that?" said the Factor.

"Father die in spring," said Beaver Boy sadly. "Him cold; then hot. Cough. Cough."

"Maybe pneumonia," said the Factor.

"He leave me to look after Mother and papoose and sell furs," Beaver Boy went on. "White man steal furs. Canoe sink in big storm. Mother and papoose gone now. All gone."

And two tears rolled down Beaver Boy's brown cheeks.

"Too bad, Beaver Boy. Too bad," said the Factor. "But things will look better in the morning. We'll get Mrs. MacInnis to fix up your cuts and bruises."

"May Beaver Boy sleep with me tonight, sir?" asked Robbie.

"Yes," answered the Factor, "and keep those blankets around you. It feels like early winter instead of late August."

The boys followed Mrs. MacInnis down one of the many corridors of the Big House, and then up a steep, open stairway to Rob's own little room among the rafters.

* * *

The morning dawned sunny and bright. Once again it felt like late August instead of early winter. Beaver Boy was more cheerful and Rob was delighted with his new brother.

"I'm all alone too," he told Beaver Boy, "except for Uncle Robert, the Factor. I hope he'll let you stay here with me."

The two boys had breakfast with Mrs. MacInnis in a little room off the Big Hall. As they had passed through the Big Hall Beaver Boy had stepped carefully on the many fur rugs covering the floor, and had looked with wide eyes at the smooth, white-washed walls nearly hidden by the stuffed and mounted heads of deer, moose, buffalo, bears and other animals and birds. He saw, too, the many guns fitted neatly into deer-horn racks.

"Factor, mighty big hunter," he had murmured.

Once outside, Beaver Boy looked around in amazement. He had never before been inside a fort, and everything was new and different to him.

He pointed to the great log fence that completely surrounded the buildings.

"Thirty feet high; made from the best logs in West," said Rob proudly.

But Beaver Boy shook his head. "I not like to be shut up," he said.

"It keeps us safe," said Rob. "And besides, this old palisade is fun; I'll show you."

In a moment he had climbed some steps to the corner bastion. Beaver Boy followed. From the sentry's lookout they could see a long way, right across the Saskatchewan River to the wooded hills beyond. Then they chased each other around the high planked gallery as far as the Big Gate, through which they had entered the Fort last night.

"Some day we'll go all the way around," panted Robbie. "But not now. Somebody's coming. See, the sentry is opening the gate."

The heavy plank gates were swung back and fastened to a strong post on either side, and two riders entered.

"I'm going through the stables," the man on the lead horse called, "but I'll stop at the blacksmith shop first to see about getting this pack horse shod."

"See the big bell over the gate," said Rob to Beaver Boy. "Sometimes my uncle lets me ring it. Maybe he'll let you ring it tonight at sundown."

But Beaver Boy was not looking at the bell, the pride of Fort Edmonton. His eyes were fastened on the person slumped on the back of the pack horse. As the little party turned and disappeared in the direction of the blacksmith shop he seemed to come to life, and grabbing Rob by the arm he shouted, "Mother, papoose, on that horse! They not drown in Saskatchewan River."

Turning, the two boys raced back along the gallery to the bastion, clambered down the ladder, and ran towards the blacksmith shop. They reached there just as the woman with the papoose in the cradleboard on her back was stiffly dismounting from the pack horse.

"Mother! Mother!" shouted Beaver Boy.

Slowly she turned and looked at him: slowly the sadness left her face, and with a glad cry she embraced her son. "Beaver Boy not dead. Saskatchewan River not get you," she whispered.

That night Rob and his uncle again sat before the great stone fireplace.

"'Tis queer how things happen," said the Factor. "If Jack Wilson hadn't just been on his way to the Fort, and if

you hadn't just overstayed your fishing time, that Indian woman and her baby and Beaver Boy might have all been dead. As it is, they will soon be with their friends at Fort Saskatchewan."

Rob nodded.

"I like Beaver Boy. I wish he could have stayed longer. We could have had lots of fun together. I was going to take him over to the stables and barns to see our horses and cows, and I wanted to show him the big ice-house, and the carpenters building the boats and the canoes, and we didn't even get to the Bachelors' House. The men there would have liked Beaver Boy."

The Factor smiled. "Don't forget, Rob. He's your brother. He'll come back some day and then you can finish taking him around Fort Edmonton."

THE BARR COLONISTS' LEADER

by Beatrice Todd

Visitors to the prosperous centre of Lloydminster often stop to admire and study a cairn erected by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board to perpetuate the memory of the Reverend George Exton Lloyd. It was to his strong character and keen business sense that the success of "the Barr Colony" was due. He was an ardent believer in the British Empire and an advocate of Anglo-Saxon settlement in Western Canada.

Before becoming identified with the expedition, he had already spent twenty years in Canada serving as teacher and chaplain in several colleges. He served as chaplain in the Northwest Rebellion and participated in the Battle of Cutknife Creek, as a member of the Queen's Own Rifles.

During those stirring years he had caught a vision of the possibilities of the prairie for agriculture. He wrote a letter to The Times of London, England, urging the migration to the Canadian prairies of the hundreds of Englishmen and their families who wanted a chance to have land of their own.

In the winter of 1903, the Reverend Isaac Barr, the organizer of the colony, was rector of Tollington Park Church

in London. He had become interested in British migration to Canada and had travelled from Edmonton along the CNR survey to pick out land for a settlement. He opened an office in Fleet Street and began to send out literature interesting Britons in his plans for an all-British colony, which later was known as the "Barr Colony."

It consisted of almost two thousand persons, some of whom had substantial resources, and brought furniture, implements, and stock to the new settlement. Their leader should have been experienced in the problems that lay ahead of them for he had farmed for fifteen years in Western Canada. The rosy picture of the new land his pamphlets gave, however, failed to mention problems. Before they left England, the Continental Church Society of London appointed the Reverend Lloyd to be their chaplain. This was to prove a very fortunate decision for the settlers.

In March, 1903, the first contingent of the new colonists sailed from Liverpool on board an old Boer War troopship, S.S. Lake Manitoba. Men, women, and children were crowded into crude bunks built in the cargo hold, divided by sacking. Privacy under such conditions was impossible, and it is small wonder that violent quarrels and riots broke out during the long voyage.

It was a lovely spring evening in April, 1903, when the first train of Barr colonists arrived in the little Saskatchewan town of Saskatoon. Much time was lost in the pleasant excitement of preparations and by the time the first parties were ready to start out on the long trek to the West late spring blizzards had turned the trail into a mire and filled all the prairie sloughs to overflowing.

The two-hundred-mile trail soon was decorated with abandoned and mired wagons. Animals strayed, were injured, or died from exhaustion, and children fell ill on the long journey. However, in spite of these hardships, the majority pushed doggedly on and made a little over twenty-five miles a day.

At last they reached their destination on the border of what is now Alberta and Saskatchewan, but these provinces had not yet been formed. Not a fence, not a road, scarcely a wagon track marked this great unbroken prairie which stretched for miles, empty and monotonous.

As long as summer lasted the settlers, although home-

sick at times, enjoyed the green of the countryside; but all too soon winter came with its unbelievable cold. They had built shacks of either logs or sods, brought provisions and gathered wood. However, their preparations were not enough for the intensity of frost which came. When the water froze in the pails and their breath was a cloud in the house, they were afraid. Mr. Barr, angered by the colonists' criticism, left the settlement for good.

Gradually the long winter passed and spring came. Things began to improve. Several men were obtained by Mr. Lloyd from the government to teach the settlers how to farm. In spite of minor setbacks, the land soon began to repay them for their efforts: it proved itself one of the most fertile stretches of land in the west.

Mr. Lloyd, elected as the colonists' leader after the disappearance of Barr, guided their destinies for many years. He was instrumental in placing this notable colony on a sound business footing. Under his leadership an Anglican church was built and a public school established. He later became Anglican Bishop of Saskatchewan and continued his efforts in the cause of religion and education until his death.

Today his famous motto is carved on the cairn commemorating his leadership of the colony:

"We have not come all this way to quit."

BUSH PILOT'S WIFE

by Sophie McKenzie

In our age of instant potatoes, cake mixes, frozen doughs and imminent space travel, it is hard to imagine what we would feel like if we were suddenly removed from all the comforts which we take for granted. Yet that is what happened to Ressa McMullen in 1931, when at twenty-two years of age she became a bush pilot's wife.

"In those days," said Ressa, "when Archie was stunt flying after he returned from flying in World War I, planes were still a novelty. But I got so that I felt quite at home in his plane. I used to enjoy the dives and barrel rolls."

The entirely new life which began for Ressa when she became Mrs. McMullen was quite another thing.

On the April day in 1931 when she arrived at Ft. McMurray, end of steel, 240 miles north of Edmonton, Ressa hardly knew what to expect. There were just a few scattered

buildings for the Airway workers and the predominantly Metis population.

"At that time, it didn't bother me. I was a city girl eager to learn about this wilderness. I joined in the plans which had been prepared to celebrate our arrival with a great deal of pleasure."

Later that night she and Archie headed for their cabin along the moonlit wooded trail. Ressa hadn't seen it yet but Archie had told her it was on the outskirts of the town and had belonged to one of his trapper friends. Finally she saw a lone sunken building in the bush ahead.

"At the sight of the weathered tar-paper on the roof, my heart sank," she said. "I managed to whisper, 'Is this it?'"

"Archie shook with laughter at my fear that this was our home. It was inhabited by a bachelor who became one of our best helpers in the years to come."

Suddenly they came into a clearing and there was the cabin cuddled by a stand of the tallest spruce trees she had ever seen. The logs were neatly separated with white chinking. This was made of oakum and smelled strongly of creosote.

At the side of the cabin was an odd-looking corral made of slab fencing.

"Archie told me it was for our dogs," said Ressa. "I love dogs so the idea thrilled."

She had brought her Alsatian puppy, Rinty, with her. Later she was glad she had, for he kept the lonely vigils with her when Archie was away flying, which was most of the time. They seldom had more than two days at a time together, and sometimes he would be away for six weeks at a stretch.

"Then the wondering and waiting grew almost unbearable," recalled Ressa. "Radio was unknown to planes of that vintage, as were all the gadgets, planes of today carry as a matter of course. I think that's how the old joke about bush pilots flying by 'the seats of their pants' or 'by guess and by God' originated."

"I'd be out the door at the hint of a motor overhead," she continued. "It was silly of me because our spruce blocked my view, but I'd dash out anyway. Then most disappointed I'd go back into our three-room cabin to wait. We, wives, seldom spoke of forced landings, knowing only too well our husbands made them every two or three days because of bad weather."

Standard search practice then was that if a flyer hadn't been seen in his flight area for seven days, a search was begun. Archie was down four days once before he was rescued. It was no wonder then that Ressa used to say "Good-bye" at their cabin door with that unspoken fear, "Will I see him again . . . will I?"

But the uncertainty of Archie's flying was only one of her worries. That first winter, because of a faulty heater she had to often take refuge in a small dugout under the kitchen floor.

"It was our ice-box in the summer and a place to keep things from freezing in winter including myself," she laughed. "I would have to go down there five and six times a day when the outside temperature dropped to sixty below outside. No matter how hard I fired the heater, I was unable to keep frost from forming on the inside walls."

"Can you imagine water freezing in a pail next to the kitchen stove? I had to break the ice each morning before I could dip into our water pail. At night, I had to hide under the blankets with Rinty at my feet acting as a foot-warmer."

Ressa's love of dogs found expression in their five-dog team.

"As a small child in Calgary, I was always harnessing our big dog to an apple box fixed with runners," she recalled. "You harness dogs much the same as you do a horse. The only difference being that by the time you have your last dog harnessed, you have to be ready to go or the dogs will get hopelessly tangled."

Curly Jewett gave Ressa a whip fifteen and a half feet long. Since she is only five-foot-two this was the cause of much local merriment. Her outfit consisted of a navy blue parka trimmed with red fox fur; matching tan-colored ski pants; and mukluks with colorful embroidery, having tassels that matched those on her hood's drawstring.

Underneath her mukluks she wore duffles made of duffle-cloth in the shape of socks. To hold her beaded, fringed moosehide gauntlets, she had braided, five-colored wool harness with pom poms on it back and front.

Archie brought her dogs, red blankets and standing irons, from way down North. Each dog had an iron which stood up in the air behind his head. Ressa had bright ribbons flying from them like little flags staffs. With her dogs har-

nessed to their carryall (a very narrow sleigh with laced sides of moosehide) she was a colorful sight on the streets of McMurray.

Her experiences with dogs were but a fraction of the skills she acquired as a bush pilot's wife. Making bread was an art of which she knew nothing.

"The other women in the North do it. So can I," she told herself.

She chose an over night recipe from her cookbook. She mixed the yeasty mixture in a dishpan and wrapped it in blankets for the night. In the morning she had a lovely active sponge which she punched down two or three times. Then she carefully formed it into loaves and set them to rise. It was a very hot day and she fired up to keep the cabin extra warm. The dough refused to rise again. She fired hotter and hotter but in vain. Finally she put them in the oven hoping that the miracle would happen there. Archie walked in the door just as she opened the oven and tearfully withdrew those heavy pans of unrisen bread.

"Never mind, Ressa," he comforted. Taking one of the hard loaves off the kitchen table he said: "Here! Catch! It's good for playing ball."

She'll always remember her first moose hunt. Archie was on his six-week lay-off. Curly Jewett was going hunting and suggested that they join him.

On the fourth day of following a moose trail over logs and through thick bush, when they were on the hogsback (a narrow ridge), they spotted their moose. To Ressa who had snowshoed the many miles each day, spending the night at one of Curly's cabins, this sighting was most exciting.

Neither Ressa nor Archie were in a position to get him, but Curly was. He did!

On her return home Ressa got out her cookbook with its section on meat canning. Although to her, moose meat tastes very dry and lean, she learned to pot-roast the meat, fry moose steaks with tomatoes and onions—and serve it from the jar. Deer meat she found to be as tender as chicken and more tasty.

Christmas time was always a highlight of Ressa's life, when she was at home in Calgary with her family. They had always been a close knit family, which celebrated the season with many festivities and a huge tree. But in her six northern Christmases, Ressa had only two in which Archie

wasn't away flying. However, she courageously put up a little tree and trimmed it, trying not to let her mind dwell on the kind of Christmas she might be having if she were in Calgary.

Once spring came, her days of cleaning and lighting the lamps were forgotten. The six-week spring break-up and fall freeze-up were oases of rest. Then the planes were dragged by tractor and six-team horse unit from their natural landing field, the River Snye. The whole town turned out to watch the planes taken to where they were hoisted on blocks to be over-hauled.

And it was usually at these times that Archie was called upon to help out. The first year, Ressa will never forget. They'd barely got Archie's plane on hoists, when a message came from Fort Smith. A young lad had been accidentally shot with a high calibre bullet. His life was in danger and he needed immediate attention.

At the time, Ressa and Archie were waiting to catch the train which was to take them on a holiday to Calgary. Fort McMurray was the end of steel to which the pokey Northern Alberta Railroad coach rattled over a shifting road-bed. Even so, Ressa was looking forward to her first visit home. Also the risk of a plane crash in trying to take off in a race against the already forming ice on the Snye, was great.

It was a decision neither of them hesitated to make. While Ressa prayed, Archie worked all night with his mechanics to ready his plane. Then ice was blasted and he took off safely. But the question in everyone's mind was, would he be able to make the round trip of nine hundred miles in time to land before that last ribbon of water froze? Ressa's prayers were answered, when Archie got back four short hours before winter set in. After that, he'd have crashed. Ressa's joy was complete when she heard that the boy recovered. She says: "I was glad that Archie was there to help."

In the spring of 1936 another emergency arose. A flood was raging through McMurray so that people had to get around in boats. Even the hangar had to be moved from the Snye. By May 8th water and ice reached thirty feet.

And on that date Archie got word from Dr. McCallum that a patient critically ill with peritonitis had to be flown to Edmonton within the next twelve hours or she would die.

But with it being spring break up a plane takeoff was hopeless.

Ressa and Archie were tormented. They were expecting their first child. If Archie decided to make a try, the risk would be terrible, not only would he leave a widow, but an orphan as well.

They walked down to the Snye and waited around until four in the afternoon. Then the ice shifted. A channel appeared. Archie decided to take a chance. His air engineer Mickey Sutherland decided to use a Fairchild aeroplane because its wings folded.

Ressa was tense as she saw them taxi out behind a boat, which was trying to chart a course for them. The take-off was so close to disaster that she gasped. The plane's tail had skimmed the ice.

After they'd taxied out from shore Archie and Mickey were shocked to find that conditions were much worse than they had thought. They could see six times as much ice below the surface as above. They almost turned back. Then the thought of the dying girl with hours of life almost gone made them risk it. Surely Ressa's prayers were answered, when they arrived safely at Cooking Lake, just outside Edmonton. An ambulance was waiting and once again after a narrow margin, a life was saved.

That Christmas day of 1936 Archie and Ressa became the parents of a baby girl. He was away down north flying cargo, not knowing that he was a father.

After that her health failed and the following summer they decided to move to Edmonton. She was saddened at having to leave that beautiful peaceful country, where they never locked their door from one year's end to the next.

Ressa's six years in the wilds as a bush pilot's wife will long remain a bright spot in her memory.



BELOVED BLACKROBE

(The Story of Father Lacombe)

by M. M. Duncan

The small Blackfoot encampment some miles south of Fort Edmonton slept peacefully beneath a starless winter sky. The campfires had smouldered out, and even the dogs were still. Suddenly the crash of rifle fire shattered the silence. With wild war cries a band of Cree invaders poured over the sleeping village, turning the night into terror and confusion.

Caught by surprise, the Blackfeet rallied desperately to the defense of their camp, but the Crees outnumbered them, and soon began to inflict heavy casualties.

Suddenly the solitary figure of Father Lacombe in a black soutane appeared in the swirling mists of approaching dawn. In one hand he carried a small white banner bearing

a red cross; in the other he held aloft the cross of his Order. Fearlessly he crossed the battle lines, calling upon the Crees to cease their fire. But all reason had left the attackers. In the ensuing blaze of gunfire the intrepid Blackrobe was hurled from his feet by the force of a ricocheting bullet which struck his shoulder and glanced off his forehead. As the Blackfeet saw their defender struck down, they flung themselves into the fray with renewed fury, and soon the tide of victory began to turn their way.

"You dogs!" they screamed at the enemy. "You have killed your Blackrobe! Have you not done enough?"

As the news penetrated the ranks of the Crees, they ceased firing. Stunned and sobered by the fact that the priest who had been their good friend had been a victim of their guns, they withdrew from the battleground with their trophies of war. But fortunately the news was premature, for the brave missionary quickly recovered from his wound, and was soon on his way to Fort Edmonton, where his name was already becoming a legend in the west.

It was not without reason that the dedicated young priest from Quebec had become known to the Blackfoot tribes as "*Arsous-kitsi-rarpi*," or the "Man with the Good Heart," and to the Crees as "*Kamiyo-atchakwtét*," or "The Noble Soul." Perhaps it was the fact that he had Indian blood in his own veins that gave him his deep love and understanding for his red-skinned brothers. As a child he had listened spell-bound to the tales of his *voyageur* Uncle but where other children played at Indian battles, his mind was already intent on going among the western savages and winning their souls with Christian teaching and love.

Following his ordination to the priesthood in 1849, Albert Lacombe worked in the Red River missions until 1852, when he was finally granted permission to come to Fort Edmonton and minister to the Indians he loved. The sheltered, peaceful life he had known in his little French-Canadian village was far different from the rough life of the frontier. The white men seemed even less civilized than the Indians, but though they jeered at the "Man in the Petticoat," it was not long before they learned to respect his name and to depend on his aid in dealing with the Indians in times of trouble.

One of Father Lacombe's fondest dreams was a self-supporting colony where the Metis and Indian could learn to farm and become useful members of the community. The

mission at Lac Ste. Anne was not well suited to agriculture, and Father Lacombe had long had his eye on a sloping hill some ten miles from Fort Edmonton. Here the Sturgeon river flowed through the valley below, and a nearby lake sparkled through the trees, and he felt that this would be an ideal site for a new mission. Accordingly, on a cold day in January of 1861, when Father Lacombe was on a trip to Fort Edmonton with his Superior, Bishop Taché, he arranged to stop and rest at his favorite spot. At once the Bishop also saw the possibilities of the location, and plunging his staff into a drift of snow at the brow of the hill he designated it as the site of the new mission.

"And it will be called St. Albert, in honor of your patron Saint," he told the delighted Father Lacombe.

Eagerly the priest threw himself into the task at hand. Already he could envision a gracious church, surrounded by a prosperous town which would some day be the centre of a thriving community. The snow was barely off the ground when he was at work with a crew of Métis. and the hillside rang with the sound of axe and saw as the work of clearing the land for the mission began. Soon crops were sprouting from the rich soil. An increasing number of Métis families were snugly housed in whitewashed cabins along the edge of the river, and a log church stood on the crest of the hill.

Despite the fact that he was still in charge of the mission at Lac Ste. Anne, and must travel back and forth to the new mission of St. Joachim which had been established at Fort Edmonton, Father Lacombe was tireless in his efforts to make St. Albert into the most advanced community in the West. His first step in this direction was the building of a bridge. Crossing the Sturgeon was a matter of great inconvenience to all, and one morning after Mass Father Lacombe gathered his congregation together.

"I am tired of this walking in the water to cross the river," he told them forcefully. "I am going to build a bridge. For those of you who help, it will be yours to use, but for those who do not work . . . you will cross in the water as before, or pay a toll. And I shall have a man there to watch that you do!"

The next morning the river bank was a hive of activity. In three days the structure was completed to the wonder and delight of the population. Many of them had never seen such a marvel before, and they crossed and recrossed it like de-

lighted children. Two hundred feet long and fifteen feet wide, it soon became known far and wide as The Bridge, for it was the only one to be found west of the Great Lakes. True to his word, Father Lacombe posted a man at the gate to collect a toll of .05c, but it could not have been much of a money-making enterprise, for the toll gate closed at seven o'clock each evening, and did not operate on Sunday, and if a man did not have five cents, no one demanded that he pay.

When officials of the Hudson's Bay Company heard of this new innovation in their territory, they ordered the Factor at Fort Edmonton to have it destroyed, but the order was conveniently ignored by Father Lacombe's friend, and the bridge continued in use for many years.

Father Lacombe was not one to rest on his laurels. With the success of his first venture assured, he turned his agile mind to other "firsts" for his settlement.

The problem of feeding the increasing population of the mission was made more difficult by the long distances over which supplies had to be freighted in. The high freight rates also created a great hardship on the little community.

With typical ingenuity, Father Lacombe organized a brigade of Red River Carts, primitive wooden conveyances which slowly and noisily made their way across the prairies. From the Red River to their destination at St. Albert was a distance of almost 2000 miles, but with a companion, Father Maisonneuve, the tireless Father Lacombe accomplished this task in a period of about two months, and excitement gripped the little settlement when the loaded carts finally arrived. With his usual foresight, Father Lacombe had included the parts of a grist mill among his purchases. When the machinery was set up and power supplied by protesting Indian ponies, flour was turned out, to the wonder and admiration of all.

With his colony beginning to thrive, Father Lacombe turned again to his original project, bringing Christianity to the Indians. For the next twenty years he ranged over a vast parish on the prairies. When epidemics of smallpox and other ills swept the Indian encampments, Father Lacombe was there to give assistance and comfort. Indians and white men alike grew to love and respect this man whose boundless love for humanity became known throughout the west, and whose wisdom in dealing with the Indians was invaluable in keeping peace on the frontier.

Always his inventive mind was at work. For many years he had found it difficult to celebrate Mass in smoke-filled, crowded Indian tents. After much thought he designed a novel, portable house-tent about 25 by 15 feet, made of buffalo skins stretched on poles. When erected and a camp stove set up inside, and the floor covered with boughs and skins, it was a marvel of luxury and comfort which astounded the Indians.

To aid the work of bringing the Gospel to the Indians, Father Lacombe had spent many years compiling a dictionary and other books in the Cree language, but now a new idea came into being. As he sat one day talking to some Indians about Christianity, he idly drew some pictures in the sand. Noticing how fascinated his listeners became, he set to work to devise a picture story of the Bible. It took over eight years to complete this "Catholic Ladder" as he called it, but when finished it was a source of great help to Indian and missionary alike. The story of Creation, the flood, and the whole Biblical events following were drawn in simple form on a long strip of paper, including the paths man may choose to right or wrong ways of life. This "Ladder" soon spread throughout the country, and eventually came to the attention of the Pope. He was so impressed that he ordered thousands of copies printed and distributed to missions all over the world.

For a time Father Lacombe was sent to minister in the Red River district in Manitoba, but his heart remained in the west. In the fall of 1880 he learned with joy that he was to return as chaplain to the workers of the Canadian Pacific Railway which was now pushing its way across the prairies. But he found this work depressing, for the rough men and their evil ways distressed him. He longed and prayed to be sent back to his Indians, and at last his request was granted. The next few years were devoted to the tribes around the new mission at Fort Macleod, and another of his dreams came to reality when the government allowed him to construct trade schools at Dunbow and Qu'Appelle in order to teach useful crafts to the Indian children. At first the young boys were like wild colts, but soon the Grey Nuns who came to assist him had them under control, and the Industrial Schools became an important part of mission work.

About this time the rumblings of the Riel Rebellion were being heard, and once again Father Lacombe was called upon as peacemaker. Mainly through his influence, the Blackfeet

were prevented from joining the Crees in the uprising. After the rebellion had been put down, Father Lacombe was invited to bring Crowfoot and other loyal Blackfoot chiefs to Ottawa as guests of the government. It was during this visit that one of the eloquent tributes to the faithful missionary was given. Following a banquet in honor of the Indians, Crowfoot rose, and with simple dignity and affection he placed his hand on his friend's shoulder and said:

"This man is our brother . . . he is one of our people. When we are sad, he is sad with us, and when we are glad, he rejoices. We love him because he is our brother."

The years that followed were spent among the southern missions, but the endless journeyings, the privations and tireless labor of the early days were beginning to take their toll. Even the country had changed with the passing of time. The onward sweep of civilization had transformed the trackless wilderness that he had loved. Gone were the snowshoe trails, the winding ruts of the Red River carts. The "Iron Horse" that the Indians had feared and resented now criss-crossed the windswept prairies, and journeys that had once taken weeks on horseback could now be accomplished in a matter of hours. Even the good Father was glad to accept the railroad's benefits, and to this end his old friend Sir William Van Horne, the President of the C.P.R. presented him with a lifetime pass. It was inscribed to Father Lacombe and Assistant, but with his usual generosity the aging Blackrobe lent it far and wide.

One story is told of two nuns who presented the famous pass to the conductor. He smilingly inquired which of the two ladies was Father Lacombe, but such was the power of his name that the pass was honored without question.

In 1897 Father Lacombe sought retirement in his "Hermitage" at Pincher Creek, but in his 72nd year he was called upon to journey north with a Royal Commission to negotiate a treaty with the Indians of the Northern Territories. The gold rush of 1898 had flooded the country with undesirables, and it was feared another Indian uprising might result. Father Lacombe had covered these same trails nearly fifty years before, but now the rough mode of travel was hard for the old *voyageur* priest. His old friend Bishop Grouard from Fort Chipewyan joined the party, and he arranged a surprise celebration for Father Lacombe to honor the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination. He was presented with a poem

inscribed on birch bark, and the evening ended with speeches and a makeshift banquet beside the trail.

With the treaty successfully completed, Father Lacombe was forced to continue travelling, this time as a reluctant beggar to obtain funds for his various organizations. After celebrating his 80th birthday in Montreal, he turned to a new plan to assist the unfortunates around him. His Métis colonies had not proved successful, for the white man's ways had only succeeded in demoralizing the inhabitants, and when the convent school was destroyed by fire, he had no heart to continue this work. A new endeavor now claimed his attention . . . the construction of a Home for the Aged. With his usual genius he had persuaded some of his rich and influential friends to rally to the cause with generous donations.

Pat Burns, the pioneer meat packer of Calgary provided some land at Midnapore on which the home was to be built, and his old friend Lord Strachona contributed a substantial cheque. But even this was not enough to satisfy the old priest, and he travelled the length and breadth of the province, and even as far afield as Quebec in order to raise the funds he needed. In 1910 the Home was officially opened, and here, in the care of the kindly Sister of Providence, the good Father was able at last to lay his burden down.

In his lifetime he had lived only to do the commands of his Lord, and now he waited patiently for the last command of all, this warrior without arms, whose dusty soutane was his whole armour of God, and whose shield of faith was his cross. Now when prairie winds blew chill, he was sheltered and warm. When owls hooted and coyotes howled in the night, and Indian war whoops sounded faintly down the wind, it was only an echo in the heart.

On December 12 in 1916, the beloved Blackrobe lay sleeping, his face calm and gently smiling beneath the silver halo of his hair. But when the Sisters sought to waken him, there was no response. *Arsous-kitsi-rarpi*, the Man of Good Heart, had crossed the last frontier into the land of eternal rest.

CALL IT EDMONTON

by Beatrice Todd

"Avast ye divils!" cried the Chief Factor, John Rowand, as he supervised the loading of the boats leaving Beaver House

for the western outposts. The season was late and there was no time to be lost if they were to get through before the onset of winter. Shouting and swearing he finally succeeded in getting the Company men and their Indian helpers to work at top speed.

It took a good man to bring order out of the crowd that thronged the landing place. Most of the Indians in the vicinity had crowded down to the river bank to bid their friends farewell and see the departure of the western packet.

"Begorra! Hire one Indian and you have his whole tribe underfoot," declared the factor to his chief clerk.

At last everything was loaded and ready to go. The packet only waited the arrival of its leader, the young clerk, Jack Pruden.

The lad was walking toward the landing with a slow step and downcast eyes. He was grieving for the death of his uncle and all his family in a fire that had destroyed his family home at Edmonton, England. A black-bordered letter had been brought to the Fort by the Brigade the previous night and the terrible news it contained had plunged the boy into mourning.

With the quick impetuosity of the Irish, the factor's stern manner changed to softness. He turned with a sympathetic look to bid his young clerk goodbye.

"Ah, lad, you suffer grievously! It's hard to bear such a heavy loss."

His clerk stood with a sorrowful look and made no reply.

"I knew your uncle when he worked here," went on Rowand gently. "He was a fine man—a good man—well-liked by all the company's servants. We mourn his loss with you."

"But, Jack," and his expression lightened. "You are at the beginning of your life. You have a great future ahead of you. This new fort"—waving proudly toward the palisades above—"shall be called Fort Edmonton only from this day on to honour your uncle's memory."

A flash of his old enthusiasm returned to the clerk's stricken countenance. His face brightened and he shook the factor's outstretched hand with a grip that made it turn white. His will to go on had been rekindled by Rowan's words.

"Thank you, sir! You can count on me. I shall get the packet through on time and return."

Forty years or more previously an Irish immigrant ship sailed up the St. Lawrence toward Montreal. Young Rowand stood on its deck eagerly watching the scattered settlements and church steeples on either shore.

"'Tis a fine new land, I'm sure, but I'm going West. That's where real adventure lies."

True to his words at 14 years he entered the service of the North West Company as an apprentice. A few years later he was a clerk at Fort des Prairies as Edmonton was then called. Working with great vigor and zeal in the Company's service, he rose rapidly after its union with the Hudson's Bay Company to the highest command in the area, factor of Edmonton.

George Simpson, Governor of Rupert's Land, described Rowand in his Secret Character Book as "one of the most pushing, bustling men in the Service. He has by his superior management realized more money for the Company than any three of his colleagues."

In this vast territory from Cumberland House to the mountains his word was law. He ruled the Indians with a stern discipline and often played on their superstitious fears with his magic. He held exhibitions of the working of chemicals, such as the effervescence of Seidlitz powders, before the astonished natives. On occasions, too, he had them hold hands in a circle while he shocked them with an electric current.

The whites, as well, knew that he was not a man to be trifled with. Once at a dinner party someone started a song ridiculing the Pope. This was more than Mr. Rowand could stand.

"I am a Catholic," he cried rising in a rage," and I shall never allow the head of my religion to be insulted in my presence."

With these words he flung his wine glass and its contents at the head of the singer.

Though not a big man, this pug-nosed, fiery Irishman made the name of Rowand respected by the whites and feared by the Indians throughout the whole North West.

"I'm going to build myself the biggest house west of York Factory," he boasted to his fellows. He kept his pro-

mise for his new residence was a massive building of squared logs seventy feet deep and sixty wide. It was three storeys high with a gallery around the second storey.

When it was finished the Indians were loud in their praise. They called it, "The Big House," and Rowand, "the Great Factor."

"Paint it red, a bright red," ordered Rowand to his workmen. "Red is the color of the Queen's soldiers to the Indians. They respect it."

So the Big House and other buildings at the Fort were painted a bright red. Its roof above the palisades was long a familiar landmark to the Brigades as they rounded the last bend in the river.

The dining-room of the Big House was described by Paul Kane, the great Canadian artist, who visited Edmonton in 1848. "The walls of the 25 by 50 foot room were painted with startling barbaric gaudiness and the ceiling was filled with centrepieces of fantastic gild scrolls." Kane thought no white man could enter it for the first time without a start and no Indian without awe and wonder.

Rowand's long service with the Company was brought to a sudden end in May, 1854. An outburst of temper at an Indian, who disobeyed his orders, brought on apoplexy causing his death. Later his bones were taken to the Catholic Cemetery in Montreal, where they lie marked by a granite shaft and plaque.

Today in Edmonton we find his name remembered in one of Alberta's tallest apartment houses. Mount Rowand, in the Rockies west of Edmonton, is another enduring monument to the memory of this fearless trader.

THE SUNDAY MAN

by M. M. Duncan

Right off, soon as I seen him, I knowed that our Sunday Man was the best. That Saturday afternoon, me and the Heinecker twins had holed up alongside of the road with our eyes peeled for the travelling preacher who was going to spend the night with my folks and then hold services the next day at the school house. When this fellow on the spavined old roan came a-joggin' into the fork, we all gave him a good once-over.

As a rider he looked more like a sack of oats tied in the middle, an' his legs was long enough to go to walkin' under the horse any time he had a mind to, but he was sort of whistlin' through his teeth an' lookin' up at the sky with his long hair blowing, like everything was jim dandy.

Soon as he spotted us kids, he hauls up the roan an' gives us a fancy salute.

"Howdy, boys. I take it you're indigenous to these parts. Am I headed right for the Brockman holdings?"

Them Heineckers looked like a couple of fish out of water, the way their mouths hung open, but I walked up an' slapped the roan on the shoulder.

"Straight down the road, Mister. I'm Tom Brockman. You the man fer the preachin'?"

"Such is my earnest intention."

He looked solemn as a judge when he said it, but deep down his eyes looked like he was laughing inside. He reached down and took hold of my arm.

"Mount up, lad. My worthy Pegasus can bear the load."

Joe Heinecker gave me a leg up, and the roan hit off down the road. I don't recollect I ever saw such a rider as that feller. His elbows stuck out, and he bounced twice every time the horse hit the ground, with the pack sack on his back giving an extra bounce in between. I was mighty glad when we pulled up at home.

Pa was in the fields, but Ma ran out to meet us, all red in the face, and slicked up to beat the band. When she got a look at our Sunday Man, I reckon he looked kind of special to her, too.

He looked tall, wrapped around that old roan, but when he got down he seemed to unfold. Even in the old clothes he wore, with his hair all shaggy, he had a look about him, like a pine on a hilltop, braced against the wind. And yet his voice was soft and full of singing, even if you didn't always get the drift of what he was saying. He gave Ma one of those fancy bows when he shook hands, like those foreign fellers do, and then he went on about how a good woman is more precious than rubies . . . only it didn't seem foolish, the way he said it, like it would have from anybody else.

Ma sent me to put up the roan, and when I got back the Sunday Man was out by the woodpile. For all he was so tall and kind of lean and lanky to boot, the way he slammed into those logs showed he wasn't any softy. He tossed me a

couple of stove lengths, and gathered up an armload for himself.

"Look alive, boy," he grinned. "Ambrosia fit for the gods awaits us. We must work up an appetite to do it full justice."

I didn't get that about the ambrosia, since the last I'd heard we were having chicken and dumplings and blueberry pie, but I was too hungry to get into any discussion right then. All I hoped was that Pa would soon come in. Ma was tearing around like a hen with its head cut off, rattling dishes and looking into pots and pans, and shoving things around on the stove. I peeked into everything, but it still looked like chicken and vegetables, and when I tried to whisper to Ma about the ambrosia, she cracked me over the head absent-like, and told me to go and wash up. The Sunday Man had slicked up, too, and brushed back his hair. He had his coat buttoned up, but his big hands stuck out of the sleeves like the coat had been out in the rain.

Well, Pa came in at last, and Ma got us all up to the table. She kept apologizing that things wasn't fancier, but that Sunday Man took one sniff of the plateful Ma had dished up for him, and folded his hands and looked up at the ceiling.

"Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith'."

He droned out the words while we all sat looking at each other and wondering when it was safe to dig in.

"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith'."

I sneaked a fork into a chicken leg, but Ma jabbed me with her elbow, so I left the fork there, and watched the Sunday Man for a sign that he was through spouting. He kept on a spell, calling down blessings on the house and the food therein, but I reckon the smell got too much for him in the end, so he whipped off a quick 'Amen,' and we all tucked in.

It seemed like that preacher feller was hollow clear down to his boot tops, the way he piled into things. He'd sort of slowed down by the time the pie came around, and I had hopes for a second helping, but when I reached for it, Ma gave me one of her looks and passed the plate down the table like everybody else was invisible. After that I left them talking around their cups of tea, and moseyed up to bed, seeing tomorrow was a big day, and meant getting up extra

early to get the chores done. Their voices came up through the hole in the floor beside my bed that Pa cut to let the stove heat come up, but somehow the Sunday Man's voice got to sounding like a lullaby, the way it sort of rocked you along, and I must have petered out. The next thing I knew, pink light was poking through the cracks in my old window blind, and the big day was here.

All morning the traffic rattled by as folks started to gather from miles around. I went down by the gate and hollered at the kids going by, but when they asked what kind of a man the preacher was, I never let on. I figured to let them be surprised when the time came.

When I got back to the house, the Sunday Man was sitting in the parlor with his head in his hands, but when he heard me in the doorway, he got up, grinning in his old way, and said, how about getting some exercise down at the barn. So we went out and helped Pa till the dinner bell rang, but somehow, for once, eating wasn't uppermost in my mind; I was anxious to get over to the schoolhouse and get the preaching under way. I wanted to see the looks on the other kids' faces when that Sunday Man got going.

The old white schoolhouse had that closed and lonely week-end look to it when we drove into the yard, but folks were standing around all over, watching for us to drive in. There'd never been such a crowd for a preaching! Pa took a look around.

"Jehoshaphat! We'll never get this raft of people into the schoolhouse."

The Sunday Man's eyes were all shiny as he pointed to the slope of the hill across the road.

"*'... and seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain'...* How better can we follow in the footsteps of the Lord than to hold our service under the roof of heaven itself?"

Pa looked over to where he was pointing. His face got sort of red, and he started to mumble. I knew right off what the matter was.

"Jeepers, mister, I don't reckon we ought to do that." I tried to sound convincing. "Feller owns that land, he's a mighty mean one. Don't know what might come of it, all us folks trampin' in there."

"That's the way of it," agreed Pa, nodding his head. "Simon Garrity, he's p'izen mean. And that son of his . . .

if Lafe Garrity was to get wind of it, there's no telling what might happen. I don't think. . . ."

His voice kind of trailed off. The Sunday Man had climbed down off the roan, and he was standing by its head, rubbing his hand over the critter's ears and looking at the hillside. The sunshine was washing over it, all warm and golden. Covered with people, it would look just like the pictures I'd seen, of Jesus preaching to the multitudes. I guess that's what the Sunday Man was seeing too, and it looked as if nothing was going to scare him off. Pa gave one last feeble try.

"It might come on a rain"

I looked at the sky. Away to the north a dark ridge of clouds hung like a far-off mountain, but I couldn't see it drifting our way for a while yet. The Sunday Man looked up too, with his head throwed back, and his eyes squinted up mighty solemn. Then he gave me a slow wink, and pointed to the top of the hill where Garrity's tumble-down barn leaned against the sky.

"If we need help, it will be provided. Yonder building could give us shelter if the necessity arises."

Pa gave up. He stayed by the rig, looking kind of long in the face, while I took the Sunday Man to meet some of the folks. We tied the roan in some shade, and started circulating around. Right off you could see how everybody was taking to him, and I felt right proud to know we were such good friends. He even got them all won over to going into Garrity's field, and when it was time to start, everybody swarmed over the fence like they was going to a picnic.

When the Sunday Man set to talking, I listened for a while, but the drift was over my head, so I just let the sound run through my ears the way I liked, and looked around to see how folks were taking it. And right off I saw something that made me feel kind of uneasy.

The first thing, those rain clouds had built up considerable in the last while, and it sure enough looked like trouble. But that wasn't all. Across the road a horse and rider had pulled up, a big grey that I'd have known anywhere. Lafe Garrity! I should have known that he couldn't stay away. Gatherings like this were just his meat. He liked nothing better than to horn in and try to break things up. But this setup was really asking for it, with folks spread out all over their property uninvited. I started to squirm around, wish-

ing I could get up there and give the Sunday Man some kind of warning, but Ma cracked me over the head and warned me what would happen if I didn't sit still, and when I looked again, Lafe Garrity was gone.

Right about then the storm moved in. The sun petered out, and the wind started whipping up the dust along the rows of people. The Sunday Man kept a-going, but when the thunder began to roll, and folks started shifting around uneasy-like, he gave up and waved his arms toward the barn.

"Friends, it looks as if we are forced to adjourn to drier quarters. Let us reassemble yonder in the barn. I'm sure there will be accommodation for us all."

He turned up his coat collar, and hit up the slope. He'd left his hat in the rig, and his long hair whipped around his face, but he still had that old grin. Folks started muttering uneasily among themselves, but after a minute or two some started drifting after him, and when the rain tipped out of the darkened sky on a long roll of thunder, we all forgot our hesitation, and hit for cover.

The big barn wasn't much more than a roof and walls. The stalls had been torn out long ago, but it was a shelter from the wind and rain. While everybody was getting set, the Sunday Man took off his coat and straightened up his wild hair some. And then, when he started reading out of his little red book, things began to happen.

I was hunkered down beside Joe Heinecker, kind of looking around, when we spotted Lafe Garrity in the doorway, his mean little eyes taking everything in. Joe gave me a nudge, his eyes popping out like a frog's.

"Now it's comin'!"

Lafe came into the barn. His face had a look on it like one of those mean old hogs that's just ready to raise a ruckus with anybody fool enough to get within range. Old Man Garrity was a mean one, sure enough, but he was just soul-mean, and stingy; Lafe was dirt-mean . . . hurting mean, right down to his toes.

The Sunday Man didn't pay him no mind. He kept right on talking, his voice ringing over the sound of the rain. He let Lafe walk right up to him, and then he let his eyes run over Lafe's face, not looking impressed at all. He didn't stop reading out of the little book in his hand.

"Yuh got no right, bustin' in here!"

Lafe shoved his face right up to the Sunday Man's, waiting for him to back down. The Sunday Man laid down the book, but he didn't need it; the words kept coming without missing a beat, and he looked Lafe right in his mean little eyes.

". . . . 'the word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all those that trust in Him'. . .," said the Sunday Man slowly, folding his arms across his chest, and rocking on his heels.

"Yuh better pack out of here!" snarled Lafe. He stepped up and gave a shove at the Sunday Man.

I was staring like to stretch my eyes out. The Sunday Man didn't miss a word, but he whipped out his arm and gave a little twist, and there was old Lafe, lying flat on his back.

A sort of gasp broke out of everybody. Lafe laid there a second, trying to get his wind back. It hadn't soaked in yet just what had happened. Then he got up slowly, staring at the Sunday Man like he hadn't seen him before.

"Yuh hadn't ought to have done that . . . preacher!" he ground out. He drew back his arm.

The Sunday Man didn't bat an eye. He had his gaze fixed on a spot somewhere over Lafe's head, but when Lafe drove in his fist, the same thing happened again. There was that quick, easy move from the Sunday Man, and Lafe was flipped neat as a flapjack. He hit the floor like to shake the rafters, and the dust and chaff sifted up around him like a cloud.

The Sunday Man stepped back, and his voice was suddenly like thunder; it was just like the voice of the Lord.

"I have pursued my enemies . . . I have wounded them that they are not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet . . ."

This time Lafe got up in a hurry. He backed off some, his shoulders hunched down, and his dirty yellow hair falling over his face, and suddenly his hand snaked down and a knife blade flashed in the gloom. A gasp ran through the crowd, and for the first time the Sunday Man stopped talking. Lafe slipped up close, his eyes glaring, and they stood measuring each other for a long moment. Then his arm shot out with the knife headed straight for the Sunday Man's heart, and some of the women screamed.

But the blade never landed. The Sunday Man stepped sideways, and his arm leaped out. Quick as a flash Lafe's arm was twisted up behind his back, and the howl he gave echoed through the darkest corners of the barn. The knife clattered down as the Sunday Man began to speak again. He started pushing Lafe toward the door. He howled again, but the Sunday Man talked him down.

"... they cried, but there was none to save them ..."

They reached the door, and the Sunday Man gave a last shove. Lafe fell out the door and lay full length with his face in the mud.

"... then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind I did cast them out as dirt in the streets ..."

There was a triumphant roll to the Sunday Man's voice. He looked down at Lafe, and then he turned and came back through the silent rows of people. He bent down and picked up the knife. He balanced it for a moment by the blade, and then he snapped it clear across the barn, and it stuck in the wall, and stayed there, clear to the hilt.

"the strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places ... thou hast delivered me from the violent man ..."

There was more, but I reckon we were all too het up to pay it much mind. When it was over, folks began straggling down the hill. The rain had let up, and everything looked washed and new, but we were all in such a kind of spell, that when Simon Garrity came clattering up in his rickety old buckboard, everybody just stood still and silent, while he stamped up to the Sunday Man and stood staring into his face like he couldn't be sure if he was real or not.

"You the preacher feller what throwed my boy around?" he got out in his gravelly old voice at last.

The Sunday Man sort of smiled behind his hand.

"Shall we say that I was just doing unto him what he would rather have done to me?"

"But you tossed him out of the barn and sent him high-tailin' it home like a scared rabbit?" persisted Garrity.

The Sunday Man gave a slow nod.

"I agree that the simile is apt, sir."

Right about then I realized that I had a front seat for another miracle. Old Simon up and grabbed the Sunday Man's hand, and gave it a real good pumping, and there was a sure-enough smile poking through his whiskers.

"I'm knowed as a mean man around these parts, sir, as anyone will tell you, but I'm not so miserable that I can't be ashamed of that worthless son of mine. He's been needin' a whalin' for a long time, but there was nobody man enough to do it afore now. This'll be a day to remember for him an' me both . . . and just to make sure that other folks remembers it too, I'm fixin' to do something that's needed doin' for a long spell."

He looked around at the folks drifting up to hear what was going on, and waved his arms.

"Here's my offer," he bawled. "I'm deedin' that land of mine over for church property, an' whatever it costs to put a church on it, I'll stand for half of it. Are yuh all willin'?"

Well, they all began crowding around, so I skinned out and went over to bring up the roan. He needed slickin' up some, after the rain, and by the time I got back, the Sunday Man was standing there alone. He was looking over at the old barn, rain washed and leaning into the wind, and he was smiling a little, like he could already see the new church standing in its place. There was a kind of wonder in his eyes, and when I came closer, I could hear him saying slowly:

"... and a people I have not known shall serve me . . . therefore will I give thanks to thee . . . and sing praises unto thy name'. . . ."

Then he noticed me beside him, and he took the little red Bible out of his pocket, and patted its worn cover.

"It's all here, Tommy. Everything you want to know . . . every problem you need to solve. Somewhere in these pages you'll find the answer. Never forget it, boy . . . never forget it."

"I'll try not to, sir . . ." I had to swallow some before I could answer. I guess he must have noticed, because he looked down at me for a long moment, kind of thoughtful-like, and then he held out the book.

"Here, Tommy . . . keep this, and sometimes, when you read it, think of me"

With the book in my hand I watched him throw his long leg over the roan, and move off slow through the last straggle of people standing back to let him pass. The sun had dragged out of the clouds at last, and it made a sort of golden path ahead of him. . . . When he came to the bend in the road, he looked back. I saw his arm lift in a last farewell . . .

WAS IT ONLY YESTERDAY?

Anne Donaldson is a native of Alberta, always interested in fabricating stories, began more serious writing after taking a course at Victoria Composite under Mrs. Margaret Johnson. She has published works in Edmonton Journal, Country Guide and Annals of St. Anne de Beaupre.

Was it only yesterday that an inquisitive four-year-old watched from her perch on a rail fence, while the grown-ups beat sheaves of grain with wooden flails to make them give up their precious kernels, then scooped the grain into buckets and held them high to pour the golden torrent slowly back onto the ground so that helpful, frisky breezes could carry the chaff away?

No, not yesterday.

Was it only yesterday that a little girl stood on the brow of a hill and gazed with wonder as the ox-drawn plow, guided by her father's strong hands, turned the shorn stubble field into an orderly, overlapping black furrows, a magic transformation before a child's eyes?

No, not yesterday.

Could it then have been only yesterday that this child listened entranced, while a young mother sang longingly the sad haunting songs of her beloved native land, now so far away?

Or only yesterday that an active sprite hopped out of bed on an early summer morn and in her bare feet, skipped through the wet grass into the willow and poplar grove where her eager small hands gathered a treasure of yellow buttercups, each with a tear drop of dew embedded in its heart?

No . . . not yesterday.

Or when a playful mite accidentally threw a stone through a granary window and then, in fear of punishment, hid in one of its shadowy corners till a handsome young father came searching and fetched her out in loving arms?

Or when a helpful waif walked along side as the yoke of oxen ponderously pulled yet another load of logs to add to the huge pile which, during a raising bee attended by good neighbors from miles around, would one day become a stable?

No, no, not yesterday.

But it seems only yesterday that with childish awe and distress, a bewildered small one beheld a mother's tears as she bathed and dressed for his last sleep, a baby brother who had lost his fight with the grim reaper, and laid him tenderly to rest on the soft white pillow inside the tiny unpainted wooden coffin, fashioned by a sorrowing father's hands?

And an impish five-year-old clutched a feeding chicken by the tail, and was in turn pecked by the rest of the flock till the small wrist was raw and bleeding, before letting go?

And it surely must have been only yesterday that with heart bursting with anticipation and quaking in fear, and clutching slate and pencil to her breast, a young woman of six years bashfully ventured for the first time into the wonderful magic world of the one-room country school house?

No, no, no, not yesterday!

See how the dear young mother and father are now burdened with age? And the self-propelled machinery that has long since replaced the flail and the oxen and the hand-guided plow? And that young child-that-was now has children and grandchildren of her own?

Indeed not yesterday! Since those tenderly-cushioned-in-memory days, so very many yesterdays have galloped into the annals of eternity.

THE PROPHECY

by J. Delany

Running Wolf was perturbed. The young warrior sat in his teepee and watched Sweet Grass, his wife, prepare the evening meal. That was the trouble; there wasn't much to prepare. Unless the band of Ermine Skins found a plentiful supply of game within the next few days, the tribe would be in danger of starvation.

Sweet Grass set a birch bark container of stewed meat in front of him, and resumed her place by the fire. After he had eaten, she would eat, if there was anything left.

"Did you see any sign of the buffalo, my husband?"

"No, there was no fresh sign, though I rode far and long. Did you find anything that could be eaten?"

"I went with the women and the young boys. We searched all day, prodding the ground with long sticks. We found many wild turnips, and some nice, young tender roots."

"Good! We shall not starve for a day or so yet."

"That is so. I am sure that you will find the Shaggy Ones soon."

"We will have to, if we want to stay alive," her husband told her. "To-night One Bull prophesied that we should find the buffalo within a week."

"He is a mighty Medicine Man. What did he say?"

"He said 'To watch and follow those who feed on the buffalo'."

"I do not understand these words."

For some considerable time Running Wolf sat smoking the long pipe, and thinking over the strange words that One Bull had uttered. What did they mean? There were no other human beings in the area, except the Ermine Skins. There hadn't been any animals seen, no wolves or coyotes, no bears. What else was there, that fed upon the buffalo? It was strange, much too strange for him to solve. He would ask his friend to explain, in the morning. Returning the pipe to its parfleche case, he lay down on a pile of robes and slept.

Next morning he wakened early, and went to One Bull's lodge. Bird-in-the-Ground informed him that her husband had risen at dawn, mounted his pony, and had gone in search of the herd. A firm believer in his spirit voices, One Bull wanted to be the one who found the buffalo.

Learning that he had headed west, Running Wolf decided to search in that direction also. As he could not pick up the tracks of his friend's pony, he decided to search the area as if he were alone in it. He was doing this very carefully, when the sound of a muffled shot came to his ears. He surmised that One Bull had probably sighted some game, and fired at it. As this thought was running through his mind, he decided on the spur of the moment, to see what had been shot.

Putting his pony to its best speed, he headed in the direction of the shot. Suddenly he drew hard on the bridle, slipped off the horse, and with his musket cocked and ready, disappeared in the bush. He had sighted One Bull's pony, nervously tossing its head, but there was no sign of the rider.

Very cautiously, using all the stealth and cunning at his command, he drew near the still restless pony, searching for a hostile presence. There was none.

Stepping out in the open, he looked down on the body of his friend. It was only too clear what had happened. One Bull had seen a rabbit, and dismounting, had fired at it. The old trade musket, already in poor condition when he had acquired it, exploded in his face killing him instantly.

The Ermine Skins had lost their Medicine Man, and now One Bull would never be able to explain the mysterious prophecy.

Galloping his pony back to camp, Running Wolf told his bad news. Immediate funeral preparations got under way at once. Bird-in-the-Ground cut off a finger, and blacked her face, as a sign of deep mourning. All the female relatives of One Bull blacked their faces, and then joined the widow in raising a long, mournful wailing cry. All the women in the tribe joined in, and this went on and on for some hours.

The body of One Bull was dressed in its finest garments, and laid on some buffalo robes. The ruined musket, his bow and the deliberately broken arrows, his knife and hatchet, his prized belongings, were all placed there beside him. The whole bundle was then rolled up, with skins and robes, and fastened so that it could not part, with ropes of rawhide.

A scaffold, high enough to be out of reach of animals, was erected on a suitable spot. The body was laid out on this, and lashed down. One Bull's favourite pony was led to the scaffold, and shot there, so that it could be of help to its master in the life to come.

The tribe then returned to camp, and set out about the urgent business of finding the buffalo, and searching for food.

They were unsuccessful. Once again wild vegetables and roots were all that they had in the way of food. The murmurings of discontent grew louder. It was talked about in the teepees, quite openly, that One Bull's medicine had lost its power. This was tantamount to saying that the prophecy was false. Bird-in-the-Ground felt tears of anger come to her eyes, as she sat alone with her grief. She knew that her dead husband had spoken true words. In time, the others would find this out themselves, and be sorry that they had spoken thus.

Running Wolf was angry, too. He had never doubted his friend's powers, and did not doubt them now. "One Bull was

a great Medicine Man," he told all who would listen. "His words are true! The buffalo are here! All we have to do is find them."

The young men of the tribe listened to him impatiently. The old men listened gravely and in silence. Then, after some time, one of them, Roving Elk, remarked that seeing Running Wolf was so sure that the buffalo were in the vicinity, surely when he went out to search for them tomorrow, he would find them without any difficulty.

Running Wolf kept his face expressionless, but the sarcasm stung him just the same. The debate went on. Some of the tribe wanted to leave the area immediately, and move to other hunting grounds much farther away, while everyone was still strong enough to make the journey. Others spoke against this idea, stating that there was much rough, hard territory to cross, and that the bad weather would soon be upon them.

Eventually it was decided that they would stay where they were for one more day, to try and locate the herd. If unsuccessful, they would immediately break camp, and start their journey for other hunting grounds at dawn of the following day.

Even before the first streaks of morning light appeared in the sky, Running Wolf had left his bed, mounted his horse, and departed from the encampment. He was going to find the buffalo, if there were any to be found.

All the long morning he rode, systematically climbing all the little hills, searching through the little gullies and wooded valleys, reconnoitering the open spaces. For some reason or another, he seemed to be going farther and farther westward. Why he did this, he could not tell. He seemed to have a powerful feeling within him, that if the herd were to be found at all, it would be in this direction.

Mid-day found him sitting on his horse, at the foot of two small hills, that seemed to be the start of a parallel range of rolling hills that stretched for some six or seven miles. He had found absolutely nothing. Once again he thought of the prophecy of his dead friend, "To watch and follow those who feed upon the buffalo." It was as mysterious as ever. What could it mean? Shaking his head in bewilderment, he kicked his heels in his pony's sides, and urged the beast up the little slope between the two hills.

There in front of him stretched a narrow valley, concealed in the fold of the hills, and extending back for several

miles. It was wooded, with thick groves of trees interspersed with open meadows. The sunshine falling on the green of the trees and the yellow of the meadows, gave a pattern of dark and light that was pleasing to the eye. Running Wolf dismounted, and from his vantage point, examined what he could see of this new place, most thoroughly. He could see no sign of the herd. His searching eyes quartered the vicinity, but there was nothing, not an animal to be seen.

He noticed subconsciously, some bird activity in the sky, over a grove about a quarter of a mile away. These birds seemed to be flying in the air above the trees, then disappearing down behind them, out of sight. As this was the only sign of life in the area, he decided to investigate it. He got on his pony and rode in the direction of the grove. Dismounting some distance in front of it, he cautiously worked his way forward, pausing for a closer look at the birds. His heart started to beat faster with excitement, at the half-formed idea in his mind. He dropped on all fours, and crawled stealthily through the grove.

He was right! There in front of him were the birds. The huge backs that they were landing on for a meal of ticks, were the backs of buffalo! Here was the missing herd, three or four hundred of them, at least.

He knew now what he had to do. Find out how far this hidden valley extended and how far down into the valley the herd was grazing. He returned to his horse and tethered it. Shedding his deerskin shirt and leggings, and clad only in breechclout and moccasins, he set out to explore the valley. He found out that the valley was five miles long and varied in width from a quarter to half mile. The buffalo had penetrated into it about two miles.

Near the far end of the valley, there was a perfect place for a "buffalo jump" or "pound." Here the ground fell away sharply, some ten or twelve feet, and then levelled off into flat ground again. He looked up at the high slope of the hills protecting this place, and labouriously climbed to the top of the ridge, marking the place so that this particular spot could be found again from the outside. Then he returned along the tops of the hills, above the valley, until he came near the spot where he had left his horse. Descending into the valley, he put on his garments, mounted, and turned his pony's head toward home.

Darkness had already fallen, and only in the west was the sky still shot with red, when the drumming hoofs of Running Wolf's horse alerted the camp that he was back.

Sweet Grass slipped outside the teepee, standing straight and tall, in front of the entrance. The others crowded around her husband, eager to hear what he had to say. Not her, she knew her place. When he deigned to notice her, she would be there, waiting to be noticed. From the expression on his face, she knew that he brought good news.

"I have found the shaggy ones," he told them, "not three hours journey from here. They are in number as the leaves of the trees. I will tell you more after I have eaten."

A young boy begged for the privilege of looking after his horse, and Running Wolf was glad to turn this task over to him.

"I am very hungry! I have found the herd."

"I know, my husband. I will get you food."

"They were located in a hidden place, surrounded by high hills, with just one entrance. I very nearly missed them."

"I knew that if anyone could find the herd, it would be you."

He ate the food she brought him, and eyed her approvingly. She was a good wife, he thought, still slim and pretty in spite of hard work. Good common sense was what she had. Of course, she had the wrong idea about him. There were smarter, braver warriors in the tribe, and just perhaps better hunters, but she would never believe that. She did everything he wished, before he had to ask. Perhaps that was why he never beat her. The idea made him uncomfortable, and he realized that he could never, under any circumstances, beat Sweet Grass.

Abruptly he rose to his feet. "I must tell the tribe about the buffalo," he said. "There is much talk to be made and many things to be decided on."

When Running Wolf took his place in the council, close to the fire, the deliberations began. The ranking chief, Red Dog, took the ceremonial pipe from its case, and filled it with fresh tobacco. He lighted the pipe, inhaling the smoke. One puff was given toward the heavens, another toward the earth, and still another toward the east. The pipe was then passed around the circle, each one smoking it in turn.

This ceremony completed, discussion could begin. Running Wolf was asked to tell how he had discovered the herd. This he did, in a manner that won admiration from his hearers, who cherished a good story well told. The chief and

his council decided that the buffalo were to be slain by means of a "pound," or "jump," so that they could kill the whole herd. This would ensure their winter's supply of meat.

The old man, Roving Elk, now made honourable amends. He suggested that Running Wolf be made captain of the hunt. This was a very great honour, and Running Wolf felt very proud indeed, although he kept his face as expressionless as ever. The idea met with everyone's approval, and he was at once appointed captain.

Rising in his place, he thanked them for what they had done. Then he began to give his orders. A hunting party of six, armed only with bows and arrows, were to set out early in the morning to find the herd. They were to shoot a few of the animals for immediate food, without stampeding them. In the meantime, at the first light of dawn, the tribe was to break camp. They would then be led by him to the far end of the hidden valley to prepare the "jump." This he reckoned, would take two days. At the end of that time, he would have further orders to give. The council broke up and Running Wolf returned to his teepee.

"We break camp very early," he told her.

"Where are we going?"

"To a place that you have never seen. We go to a hidden valley, where the buffalo are."

"I will be ready. I can start to pack a few things now. How far is it?"

"If you start at dawn, we will be there by the time the sun stands directly overhead."

"That is a long way. In what direction do we go?"

"The herd lies south and west of us."

"Who is the captain of the hunt?"

"I am."

"Oh my husband, I am so proud that you have been chosen! My heart sings with gladness! Who else but you could find the buffalo, when all the others failed?"

"Peace, woman! There is too much talk in this teepee. I want to sleep."

"Yes, husband."

"The camp broke up early the next morning, as soon as there was a trace of light in the sky. The hunting party, with their women moved off first, but it was not long before all were on the march.

Running Wolf guided the band to the foot of the hills that concealed the hidden valley. He led them close to the far end of the valley, up the slope to the spot that he had previously marked. There, they could see spread out before them, the floor of the valley and the place where the buffalo jump could be constructed. A few miles away, they knew the herd grazed peacefully, leisurely moving toward them. They would have to work fast.

Descending the hill, to the floor of the valley, Running Wolf walked to the edge of the incline, and leaped down on the flat ground of the lower level. With a sharp stick, he marked out on the ground, a rough circle of about a hundred yards in circumference, immediately below the incline.

The tribe was then ordered to cut down all the trees within the area of the circle, leaving the stumps standing. They were then to build a fence about five feet high, with no openings.

This fence was to be built by laying the cut trees with all their branches on, on top of other trees, about the circumference of the circle, until the desired height was reached. Other branches and twigs were stuck in and through, until the whole fence was securely fastened together.

While this was going on, the best axe-men in the tribe, under Running Wolf's direction, mounted the incline, and on the upper level, started to cut down more trees.

Two sticks were placed as markers, about ten yards apart, on the edge of the little cliff. From each of these sticks, long V shaped fences were built; the ten pace opening being at the point of the "V." These fences were built in the same manner as the one below, by placing trees one on top of the other, and lacing them together with sticks and twigs. Each fence was built solidly for about one hundred yards, on either side. Then gaps or spaces were left every few yards, but each fence was extended in this fashion for about another two hundred yards.

What Running Wolf actually had, was a gigantic funnel, whose only opening other than its wide entrance, was the thirty foot gap at the incline's edge.

With men, women and children, eagerly working now that their bellies were full, the corral and the long wing-like fences were finally completed.

"Tomorrow," the captain of the hunt told the tribe, "we bring in the buffalo. Spotted Deer, Night Walker, and Wandering Bear will do this. White Hawk will coax them into our trap."

The four warriors mentioned were young hunters of great promise. They were pleased with the responsibility that was given to them.

At dawn next morning, the young men set out on their long and tedious job of bringing in the buffalo. They had to get behind the herd and start them slowly moving toward the pound, without alarming them. Before the sun was well up they were in position, and had started to move the shaggy ones. This was done by lighting fires of grass or dung, and letting the smoke drift toward the buffalo. The beasts would slowly edge away from the drifting smoke, and were thus kept moving in the right direction.

When they were in sight of the fences, the young men started to drive the herd faster, until they were all inside the entrance. Here, White Hawk with a buffalo skin over his head, was waiting. When he saw the animals approaching, he moved slowly into the area between the fences, walking always deeper into the trap until they appeared to be following him. He then started to run, at high speed, imitating a buffalo as well as he was able. The braves in the rear, now shouting and yelling, drove the herd forward as fast as possible. Everybody in the tribe, rushed to the fences filling the gaps, making loud noises, and preventing the herd from taking a wrong direction. When the beasts had been driven into the trap, they were blindly following White Hawk. He led them to the very edge of the incline, before dropping his robe and leaping for the safety of the fence, at the last possible moment.

The buffalo, following immediately behind, had nowhere to go except through the gap and over and down the incline. They tumbled down like a brown torrent, pushed by the pressure of those behind. Many broke their necks in the fall, others their legs on the stumps that had been standing. Those that survived the fall, by now almost exhausted, kept circling about the pound, moving from east to west, never against the sun.

The men of the tribe, now stationed themselves around the corral fence. Armed with bows and arrows, they shot again and again. Each arrow had the private mark of the owner on it, so the kill might be identified. Finally the last bow-string twanged, and the last shaggy head dropped. The whole herd had been killed.

It was time for the women to take over, and the work of skinning, butchering, and cleaning commenced. The men

of the tribe looked on, and lent a hand with some of the really heavy work.

The young boys of the tribe reported that they had found some late-bearing saskatoon bushes nearby, so that when the pemmican was made it would have its usual delicious flavour.

Everyone was in a good mood. There was lots of half-raw buffalo meat to be had, tongue or hump. It was rumored that the chief Red Dog, might give a feast, or perhaps Running Wolf, or perhaps both might give feasts. It was certainly nice to have lots of meat again, and to know that there would be food and robes and clothing for winter.

In his teepee, Running Wolf was eating some choice bits of buffalo hump that Sweet Grass had just roasted for him, over her cooking fire.

"Sweet Grass," he said, "I have been thinking."

"Yes, my husband?"

"I think that I should give a feast."

"That will be very nice."

"Red Dog may give a feast, too."

"Then you must give your feast before he does."

"Why?"

"The mightiest hunter of the Ermine Skins should be first in everything pertaining to the hunt."

"All right, I'll give a feast the day after tomorrow."

"No!"

"Why not?"

"Tomorrow! The day after may be too late."

"Very well, tomorrow."

That night at the council, Running Wolf received many compliments. All the old men said that they could not remember such a successful or well-managed hunt as the one just completed. The young men agreed with them. They had handled themselves well on the fences during the actual shooting, and had learned much. Spotted Deer, Night Walker, Wandering Bear and White Hawk were acclaimed for their efforts.

Running Wolf raised his head and caught the glances of the others about the fire. It was clear that he wanted everyone's attention.

"I wish to speak of my friend, One Bull, who is no longer with us. One Bull was a powerful medicine man who made

many remarkable prophecies that came true. You know that this is so, men of the Ermine Skins."

A murmur of agreement, "This was so," came from about the circle.

"Yet when One Bull made his prophecy, 'To watch and follow those who feed upon the buffalo,' you did not believe him."

Another murmur, this time with undertones of dissent, reached his ears.

"One Bull was a true prophet! He did not lie! His prophecy was true!"

"Tell us, Running Wolf, how One Bull's prophecy was true," asked Red Dog.

"He said to watch and follow those who feed upon the buffalo. It was the birds that showed me. I saw the birds in the sky, wheeling and dropping down behind a grove. I followed them, and they led me to the buffalo. They were landing on the backs of the shaggy ones, feeding upon the ticks. One Bull's prophecy was true."

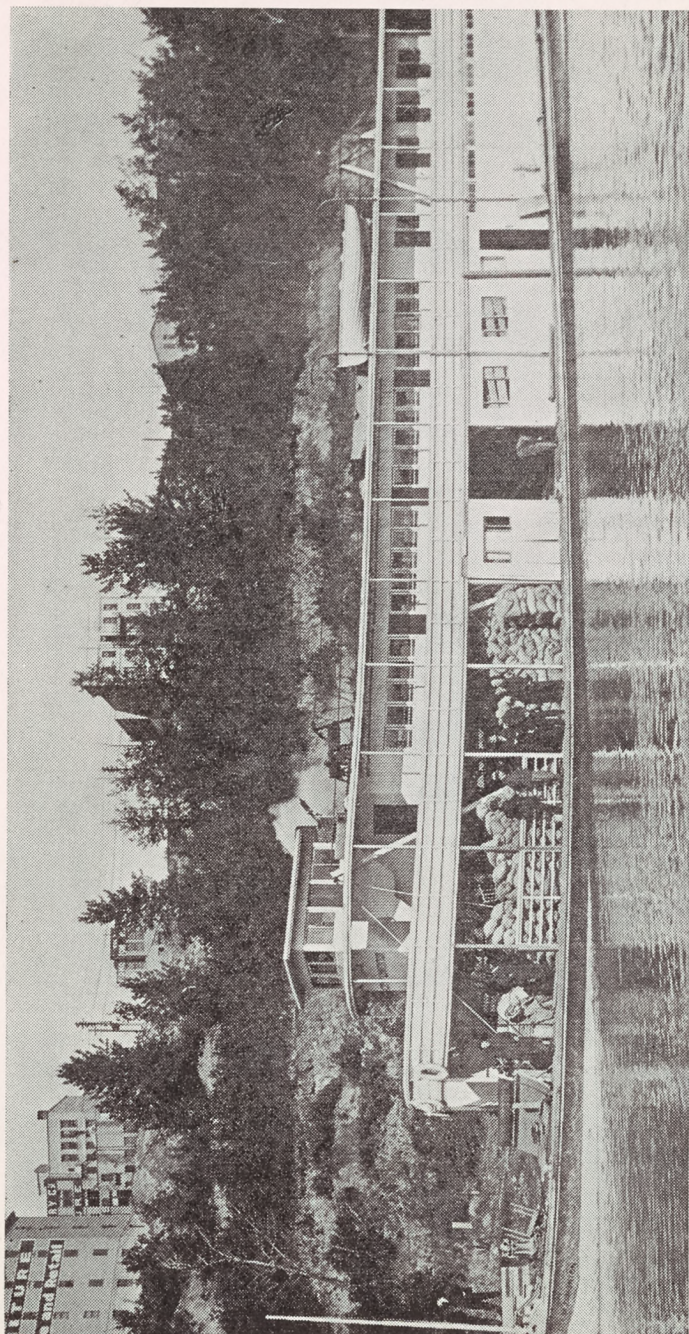
There was silence for several moments, and then Red Dog said softly, "We were wrong. His prophecy was true; his medicine was strong."

Another said, "He was a great Medicine Man and a mighty warrior."

Roving Elk summed it up, "He was a wise man and a mighty hunter. We will miss our friend."

Running Wolf lowered his head. He was through speaking, and his dead comrade was vindicated.

Off to one side, in the teepee of a relative, sat Bird in-the-Ground. Once again she felt tears come to her eyes. This time they were tears of gratitude. Through the open doors of the lodge, she saw a blanket-clad figure, tall against the moon, stride noiselessly past. She smiled. Running Wolf was going home.



—Courtesy McDermid Studio Ltd.

The pride of the Saskatchewan River in the early days; a freighter when necessary but she also served as a pleasure craft and passengers enjoyed cruises to Big Island upstream. Dancing at night was a delight to the dance-minded.

THE OLD RIVER BOAT

by J. Campbell Smith

Mrs. J. Campbell Smith was born in Charlottetown, P.E.I., of United Empire Loyalist and Scottish stock, whose grandfather, Campbell, a deep-sea captain, supervised the building of his own ship then sailed around the Horn. Six months on the high seas brought him and his immigrant ship to New Zealand, where he established a colony at Auckland.

She spent four years at Emerson College, Boston. After graduation and a banking experience in the Peace River country, she helped open the first bank in Beaverlodge, Alberta. She married in leap year and as wife of an elite seedgrower, was assistant publicity director of Monkman Pass Highway Association. She was in business in Dawson Creek during the building of the Alaska Highway. She spent a number of years in business in Edmonton and has now established an Antique, Tourist and Nativecraft venture on Jasper Avenue East.

This tale of the old river boat touches a bit of history and brings to light a true story. By 1910 Edmonton had two railroads, the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific. The latter had just arrived that year. The rush for gold in the Yukon with many outfitters working from this point and the excitement of good land available in the Peace River District, had played their part in keeping the town busy. The Saskatchewan, a navigable river, had had its share of importance and still had two river boats. One was called the "City of Edmonton."

It was a one hundred and thirty-two-foot stern-wheeler built by John Walter and used on weekdays for his lumbering operations upstream. On Sundays and holidays it was a pleasure boat used for dances and round-trips to Big Island for picnics.

A pal of mine, Smitty, used to laugh and tell of an embarrassing moment one of the dances on this beautiful boat caused him. A cousin had talked him into going on the evening cruise to Big Island because dancing to the strains of a good orchestra could be enjoyed enroute.

Smitty wanted to get ready early. This was the big night. He had consented to go to the dance on the river boat and Frances, a neighbour girl, said she would accompany him. The horses must be rounded up. Tonight they were grazing on the hogsback, near what is now Crestwood. He was getting a little nervous by the time he had brushed and saddled Mac, a beautiful chestnut with a white star on his forehead.

Smitty had not been to a dance on the boat before; in fact it was the first time he had taken a girl to a dance any-

where. He hurried Mac and soon the horses were in the corral. Swinging the saddle off Mac, he hitched him to the buggy and then tied him to the fence. He looked at his watch. He still had to bathe and change into his good clothes; wondering, while dressing, if Frances would be ready on time. The streetcar only came as far as 116th Street; they must not miss it or they would be late for the start of the cruise to Big Island.

Frances looked lovely and soon they were near the car stop where a man waited to take care of the horse. Mac shook his head, turned his neck and looked back at his young master, who was just eighteen. The horse seemed to sense there was something new going on. The street car was already there. As he helped the girl up the car steps, he was conscious of being a little warm. It was a beautiful June night. He put his hand into his pocket; now he was not only warm but red hot! No money in his pockets; not a cent anywhere; only a clean handkerchief! His wallet and money were safely home in his old clothes!

The girl was two years his senior. As he looked at her he was grateful she was so understanding. He assured her that if she had enough money to get them to the boat, his cousin would be waiting on the wharf, and they would be alright. Lorne would have the money, he knew.

It was a wonderful evening and ended all too soon. His cousin's girl stayed at the Y.W.C.A. and curfew at the Y was eleven sharp and no later. How were they going to make it? It was late when they ran up those steps. The matron needed real persuasion to open the door even a crack. But as soon as it happened the boy was ready and a manly shoe was pushed into the opening; the girl was safely home at last.

Frances and Smitty thought the evening was still young. She lived with her aunt Nannie, who was very deaf. They tip-toed in; Nannie always kept a light burning in her room and it shone dimly over the partition that did not reach the ceiling; no need for any more light, the pair thought.

They chatted gaily, thinking Nannie was fast asleep. Now Nannie was deaf but her eyesight was perfect. Soon her sharp voice called, "Frances, is there anything the matter with the light out there?" Frances excitedly whispered to her companion that he must go.

Later, in his own yard, he unhitched Mac and hung his bridle near the barn door. As he brushed his chestnut once

more before retiring, he decided that horses were simpler to understand than women.

In 1918 the "City of Edmonton" had to be abandoned and excursions to Big Island were discontinued. You can still see the outline of its flat bottom in the sandbar near the High Level Bridge.

A DOCTOR OF THE NORTH

by Beatrice Todd

"It's the greatest mineral strike on this continent," cried Big Bill Vanderwert, director of a dozen New York companies, raising his voice to be heard above the plane's roar.

"There's billions of dollars of ore in our holdings alone," declared Randy Steen, a big time promoter of mining stocks.

"We'll wire New York as soon as we land in Edmonton and get the Syndicate working," cried David Corcoran, a celebrated corporation lawyer.

The fourth member of the party was younger than the rest. There was just a tinge of grey in his curling black hair. He was Dr. Donald Payne, a famous New York specialist. Instead of joining in the excitement of his companions, he sat listlessly gazing out of the plane window.

The four men were returning from an inspection trip to their newly-acquired holdings along Great Slave Lake.

Below the plane, the doctor saw a patchwork quilt of green forest, sparkling lakes, and tiny clearings set in the bush, for they were now approaching the outer fringe of northern settlement. The sight brought the past all back to him. It reminded him of his home and his boyhood days. He had been raised on a small bush farm in the north. His father had been the village doctor.

Perhaps it had been a mistake to come on this trip, he told himself. Instead of forgetting, he seemed to be remembering the past more keenly. Jenny's face kept intruding in his thoughts.

He closed his eyes and began to scold himself. It was foolish to feel the way he did. He had reached the top of his profession. People sought him out—a busy New York specialist with a large fashionable practice. He was a very

successful man and was fast becoming a rich one. He had everything a man could wish for and ought to be happy, but lately things had begun to lose their zest for him. He didn't take the same pleasure as he had in his smart new office and in the long line of fashionable patients.

They passed before him in an almost unending line like the precision timing of a mass production plant. Miss Green took their case history. Miss Whitely made their blood tests. Miss Storey took their cardiographs. He met them briefly and made a diagnosis. There was something so terribly impersonal about it all.

Life had become tasteless and flat, and there seemed to be nothing he could do about it. He had vainly hoped this trip and the new mining venture would snap him out of his growing depression.

With an effort, he brought his thoughts back to the little clearings set in the bush below. He noted the log houses and the tiny acres of crop land wrested with so much toil from the grip of the forest and muskeg. It made him think of his own home and his mother's sacrifices to get him to college.

At that moment there came a break in the hum of the engines. What was wrong? The pilot was descending.

"What's the matter?" cried the three financiers in alarm.

"There's a man in trouble down there. He's signalling for help," explained the pilot.

In a little clearing beside a lake, a man was frantically waving a white tablecloth at the plane.

"You can't stop now," protested the three magnates. "It'll make us late for our directors' meeting tonight in Edmonton."

"Sorry, gentlemen, but it's my business to go down and see what's wrong. It might be a matter of life or death," replied the pilot as he prepared to land with his pontoons on the lake.

"This is an outrage! We'll report you to the company!" sputtered Big Bill. "This delay may cost us thousands of dollars."

As they landed on the lake, one of the pontoons struck a submerged log with a splintering crash. The plane lurched

and then righted itself. The pilot taxied to shore toward a tiny pier where a frantic man rushed to meet them.

"My wife is very ill. She needs a doctor."

"I am a doctor," said Doctor Payne, quietly stepping forward.

"Thank God!" gasped the man, turning to go. "Come with me quickly."

"But, Doctor, you can't go. Think of our directors' meeting tonight in Edmonton," protested Randy Steen.

"A woman's life is in danger," replied the doctor as he prepared to follow the settler.

"It's all right, Doc," spoke up the pilot. "I'll be a couple of hours repairing the pontoon before I can take off again."

Dr. Payne followed the homesteader in silence up the path to the little log house in the clearing. The door opened upon a small kitchen, clean but sparsely furnished. A large pan of water was boiling on the wood stove in one corner. A old-fashioned grandfather clock ticked on the mantel shelf.

From an inner room, a nurse hurried toward them. The sound of a woman's moans could be heard through the half-open door.

"How is she?" cried the man anxiously. "Has the baby . . ."

"She's about the same," replied the district nurse gravely, "but she can't hold out much longer without help."

"I flagged a plane down and this doctor was on board. He's offered to help," explained the frightened man.

Doctor Payne gasped in surprise as the nurse turned her face toward him.

"Jenny! After all these years! What are you doing here?"

"I am the District Nurse, stationed here by the Provincial Government."

"Then this is what you chose . . . instead . . ."

"It was what you wanted once too. . . ."

From the inner room came a low moan of anguish.

With a start the nurse came back to the urgency of the present. She outlined the woman's situation to the doctor in a few words.

"Quick, Jenny, help me to scrub up," cried the doctor, remembering what he had come to do.

In a few moments it was done, and the doctor and nurse hastened into the inner room to the sick woman. A long struggle began to save the mother and child.

The anguished father paced back and forth in the kitchen tending the fire in the stove and keeping the water boiling. At last he lay his head down on the table in despair as the mantel ticked off the long minutes.

Would she live? Oh, God . . .

It was an eternity to him before the door finally opened and he heard the sound of a baby's cry. He started up from his seat with a glad cry, as the nurse came out with a tiny bundle wrapped in a blanket.

"It's a baby boy," smiled the nurse reassuringly as she showed him the tiny wrinkled face of his son.

"How is she, doctor?" cried the man hastening toward the doctor.

"She's very weak, but with rest and good nursing she'll pull through."

"Oh, thank you, doctor." Tears welled up in the poor man's eyes as he wrung the doctor's hand. "You saved her life. How can I ever thank you enough?"

The man's gratitude touched the doctor and made him feel better than he had for a long while. The nurse smiled at him, with her old smile, the one he remembered so well. He'd forgotten how pretty Jenny was, pretty in a wholesome sort of way! He knew now how he had missed her!

He stepped outside to get a breath of fresh air and to think. Meeting Jenny again like this had been nice. He knew he could never persuade her to leave the North.

"Come on, Payne, we're ready to go. The two hours are up," cried Randy Steen, hastening toward him from the lake, where he could hear the plane's engines warming up ready to take off.

"I can't leave yet, Randy. You'll have to go without me. The woman is not out of danger."

"But surely, it isn't up to you to stay. Let them get someone else."

"There is no other doctor within a hundred of miles of here. I'm staying as long as I'm needed."

"Don't be a fool, Payne," put in David Corcoran, who had joined them at that moment and heard his last speech. "You're throwing away the chance of a lifetime. We'll take in someone else if you don't come with us."

"Sorry, I can't leave her yet," was the doctor's unhesitating reply.

As he watched the big men of Wall Street walk away toward the plane, Doctor Payne felt suddenly very happy. He now knew Jenny had been right when they had quarrelled about his going to New York because he could make more money. He realized what his mother had meant long ago when she spoke of his father who had spent a lifetime doctoring in the North.

"He never made much money, but he helped a lot of poor people in his life. He was the happiest man I ever knew."

And he thought all these years that he was a great success as a doctor! He walked back to the house in a thoughtful mood.

Later, after the patient was sleeping and out of danger, he rode toward the nearest settlement in Jenny's battered old car.

"Why did you break our engagement and leave giving no address, Jenny?" he questioned.

"Because I saw your mind was made up to go to New York. I knew I was not cut out for the life you were going to live there," she answered. "Besides I had dedicated my life to work in the North."

"You thought I should have come back North to practice," questioned the doctor.

"That was what your Mother prayed and worked for," declared Jenny. "She never complained, but it hurt me to see the hurt look in her eyes when you never came home. You were too busy with your career."

"I always sent cheques, though," protested the doctor.

"It wasn't the money she wanted," cried Jenny with a flash of her old spirit.

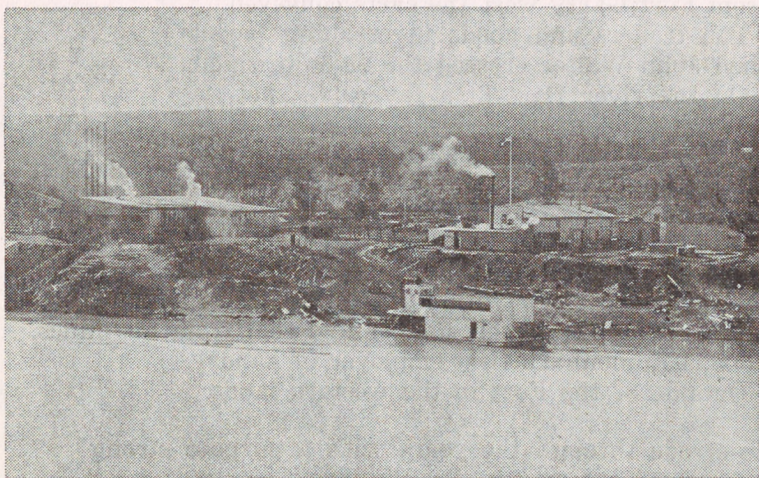
Like an inspiration, everything became clear to the doctor.

“Jenny! If I were to give it all up—sell out my practice and come back North to doctor . . .”

“Are you sure that is what you want, Donald? There wouldn’t be much more than a living here. Everyone is so poor on these homesteads.”

“The need is great. I’ve seen that. My life has been so empty in New York. I was considering selling out and returning anyway. If I were to open an office here in this town, would you reconsider your decision about marrying me, Jenny?” he asked eagerly leaning toward her.

“Oh, Donald. This is more than I ever hoped.” She smiled as she melted into his arms and he kissed her.



—Ernest Brown Collection

EDMONTON PIONEER

by Archie Hollingshead

Doughty John Walter was an Orkney man
With the rugged strain of a Viking Clan,
A boatbuilder’s son of the Fishing Ork
Who favored a yawl they called the York.

The son grew up in his Father’s trade
On crafts of wood that were all hand-made
Then reaching an age which neared a score
He sought adventure far from his native shore.

He enrolled with his chest of carpenter tools
With the Hudson's Bay Company strict in its rules.
He embarked for the West with the setting sun,
For a Canadian Post called Edmonton.

The Company had chosen this Orkney boat
For Rupert Land trading and transport afloat,
The pioneers found their only access
Was by boat on the streams of the wilderness.

Through many years in the quest of furs
He built the York boats for the voyageurs.
Until travel and trade that was waterborne
On the great Saskatchewan was outworn.

From Fort Garry west the carts conveyed
The traders and goods in creaking parade.
Then John Walter crossed the river to squat
On the river flats in a favorable spot.

The Orkney man found an interest in trees
That lured him from gold and fur peltries.
He could see the fine lumber white spruce would make
And turned to the forest its treasures to take.

His industries grew with the stirring times
With demands for his lumber and coal from his mines.
He was Edmonton's first employer of hands
Outside of the Fort in the western lands.

He strode through the years with a purpose strong
A prominent man in the Western throng.
His carriage was straight and his lips held smiles,
And his voice the burr of the Scottish Isles.

He never got rich, for his money was spent
For the good of the growing settlement.
In the year Eighty-Two he built the first ferry
To make river crossing for all safe and merry.

His house stood alone like a beacon at night
To trail-weary travellers a heartening sight.
And to see his abode so homey a place
Gave newcomers courage the Frontier to face.

